Networks, Regions and Nations

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Networks, Regions and Nations

Shaping Identities in the Low Countries, 1300–1650

Edited by

Robert Stein and Judith Pollmann

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On the cover: Ship symbolising the Habsburg possessions in the Low Countries, carried along at the funeral of Charles V in Brussels, 1559.

La magnifique, et sumptueuse pompe funèbre faite aus obsèques, et funérailles du très grand, et très victorieus Empereur Charles Cinquième, célébrées en la vile de Bruxelles le XXIX. jour du mois de décembre M.D.LVIII. par Philippes Roy Catholique d'Espaigne son fils. Anvers 1559. BM Besançon, 53 522 (2nd plate after the text).

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This volume has grown out of a meeting that was held in May 2007, when a group of scholars from the Netherlands, Belgium and the United Kingdom and the United States met in Leiden to discuss the dynamics of identity formation in the Low Countries between 1300–1650. The aim of this gathering was to present and contextualise the findings of the NWO project 'Centralisation or particularism? The development of national identities in the Netherlands (c. 1250–1585)'. We would like to thank the Dutch organisation for scientific research, NWO, for making this meeting and this volume possible. Wim Blockmans offered valuable advice and support throughout. We are grateful to Justine Smithuis for her help in the editing of this volume, and to Lex van Tilborg for his work on the index. Finally, we would like to thank Andrew Gow, for agreeing to give this volume a place in the series, the anonymous referees whose comments have helped to make this a better book, and the staff at Brill, who have cheerfully helped us see it through press.

Robert Stein
Judith Pollmann

Leiden, 23 June 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Robert Stein

In 1549, the future King Philip II of Spain visited the Low Countries in order to have himself acclaimed as the legitimate heir to his father as sovereign of the Burgundian-Habsburg lands. In the Burgundian-Habsburg state such a progress, also known as a *joyeuse entrée*, was a major and crucial step in the transfer of power. It took the prince no less than seven months to visit all localities. Everywhere, he was greeted with great joy, *tableaux vivants* were presented, processions were held, plays performed, jousts fought. The splendour conveyed all kinds of messages, some only comprehensible to those who were well-versed in the Low Countries' legal and political culture, some obvious to all. No-one, for instance, could fail to notice the importance of the oaths that were sworn by the prince, as happened in Ghent, where Philip, according to custom, should ring a bell when he had sworn his oath as count of Flanders, or in Leuven, where all the articles of the Brabant constitution—the famous *joyeuse entrée*—were proclaimed by the chancellor. However, not all messages were unequivocal. To associate Philip with biblical and legendary kings like David, Salomon, Arthur and Charlemagne was not just pious flattery; it also reminded the prince that he was expected to follow in the footsteps of these just and fair rulers.

Moreover, the festivities expressed not only the love of the Netherlanders for their common ruler, but also reminded him that the Low Countries formed a diverse polity, that consisted of a range of principalities and many more towns and liberties, and which all cherished their own origins and local differences. In Brabant, Philip was reminded that his predecessors had been the dukes of Brabant; in Flanders, that they had been counts of Flanders. In Hainault he was confronted with a *tableau-vivant* of twenty-two virgins representing the county's towns. In Antwerp he was greeted by the local antihero, the giant Antigonus.[1] The multiplicity of Philip's status in the Low

[1] J.C. Calvete de Estrella, *Le très-heureux voyage fait par très-haut et très-puissant prince don Philippe, fils du grand empereur Charles-Quint depuis l'Espagne jusqu'à*

Countries was confirmed by the nineteen princely titles that he was to carry, ranging from the fictitious and megalomaniac title of duke of Lotharingia to the modest but real seigniorial title of Mechelen.

The princely progress in 1549 was sandwiched between the conclusion of two treaties that were intended to complete the unification of the Low Countries: the treaty of Augsburg of 26 April 1548 established the Low Countries as a virtually separate entity in the Holy Roman Empire—a 'Burgundian Circle'—, while the Pragmatic Sanction of 4 November 1549 confirmed that all the principalities would be subject to the same rules of succession. Thirty years before, the area dominated by the Burgundian-Habsburg house had looked very different, mainly consisting of the western parts of the Low Countries. Yet Charles V had extended his control over the east, and it seemed that in 1549 all was ready for the formation of a new and lasting state.

As it happened the new state was not to last. Forty years later, the Low Countries had been split by Revolt and civil war. The northern parts were now a Republic that was on the brink of becoming a world power in its own right; the southern parts, on the contrary, remained a province of the enormous Habsburg empire.

Even if the existence of the Seventeen Provinces as one political entity was short-lived, the ambition to unify the territories had been in evidence long before the sixteenth century. With hindsight we can establish that the unification started with the acquisition of Flanders and Artois by the Burgundian house in 1384.[2] When compared with the older unions, the main importance of the unification from 1384 onwards is that it had a more lasting effect, even if it did not result in a permanent union. Not only did it produce a lasting change of status for old feudal principalities like Flanders, Brabant and Guelders, by detaching them from their formal feudal ties with France and the Empire, it also led to a thorough modernisation of government. From

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ses domaines de la Basse-Allemagne avec la description de tous les États de Brabant et de Flandre, trans. Jules Petit (Brussels, 1873). See for an interpretation of this kind of manifestations: Wim Blockmans and Esther Donckers, 'Self-representation of court and city in Flanders and Brabant in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries', in *Showing status. Representations of social positions in the late Middle Ages*, ed. W.P. Blockmans and A. Janse (Turnhout, 1999), 81–111.

[2] As André Uyttebrouck has shown, a series of dynastic unions inside the Low Countries' territory, starting in the middle of the eleventh century, long preceded this: André Uyttebrouck, 'Phénomènes de centralisation dans les Pays-Bas avant Philippe le Bon', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 69 (1991), 872–904.

this perspective, the formal unification of the Low Countries in the middle of the sixteenth century was an important precondition for the eventual emergence of the current states of Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxemburg in the nineteenth century.

Even so, by the middle of the sixteenth century, the extent of 'unification' of the Low Countries was limited. The Low Countries consisted of a hotchpotch of semi-autonomous principalities and lordships. Its ecclesiastical map did not reflect territorial realities (something Philip II set out to change), there was no one *lingua franca*, its constituent parts looked back to centuries of conflict with each other, and its culture was characterised by strong localism. This diversity may have been extreme, but it was by no means unusual. More often than not, late medieval and early modern European princes ruled over 'composite states', the constituent parts of which had different traditions and jurisdictions, legal systems and languages.[3] As such most principalities did not necessarily have much in common beyond the dynasties that ruled them.

In discussions about the emergence of national identities, most attention has been focussed on the state. Since princes were often aiming for a certain degree of centralisation, it has often been assumed that the emergence of new feelings of common identity was also the result of interventions from the rulers. Yet when we consider the case of the Low Countries, it is clear that this cannot be the whole story. If the development of common identities was just the work of ruling princes, how then is it possible that such common identities could not only survive the demise of their rulers, but could also be used to reject and challenge princely rule? In 2000, Wim Blockmans and Robert Stein of Leiden University initiated the project, 'Centralisation or particularism? The development of national identities in the Netherlands (c. 1250–1585)', with a view to readdressing the problem of the unification of the Low Countries. Unlike earlier generations of scholars, their aim was not to trace the 'inevitability' of the emergence of the modern states of Belgium and The Netherlands. Rather, they aimed to challenge the conviction of most scholars that the unification of the Low Countries was exclusively a top-down process, initiated, legitimised and skilfully managed by the Burgundian dukes, their

[3] Compare: J.H. Elliott, 'A Europe of composite monarchies', *Past and present* 137 (1992), 48–71.

Habsburg successors and their administrative clique. The project's aim was to investigate the existence, discontinuity or continuity of identities at different levels in the Low Countries in a period of radical political change. What happened in the lower strata of society? Did the new political creation find a place in the hearts and minds of the subjects, or did it even result from such emotions? And what happened to existing identities, attached to the principalities now subsumed in the Habsburg state, which had developed over centuries? In other words, the project has sought to address the tension between the traditional, 'regional' identities in the old principalities of the Low Countries and the possible development of a new, supra-regional identity in the developing Netherlandish polity as a whole.[4]

The main agenda of the Leiden research program was to compare and contrast the regional identities that were attached to the former principalities, and the development of overarching supra-regional Netherlandish identities. The question was to what extent regional identities were affected by the emergence of a common identity for the Seventeen Netherlands, the territory that was formalised in the 1548 and 1549 treaties.[5] On a regional level, it was decided to select two principalities that had come into being as dynastic creations in the high Middle Ages: the duchy of Brabant and the county, later duchy, of Guelders. These were chosen because their attitude with regard to the Low Countries' unification differed radically; Brabant passed quietly into the hands of the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty, and the long-term presence of the court and of many central institutions guaranteed it a place in the centre of political power. Guelders, on the contrary, long maintained its resistance to any form of incorporation into the Burgundian personal union, as is evident from the many wars Guelders fought against Brabant and other principalities in the Netherlands from the end of the thirteenth century. Later, the lordship of Friesland was added as an associated project. Friesland is an interesting case because of its particular status as a territory that was—or claimed to

[4] In a more general sense, the project was the result of their growing interest in the meaning of identities for state-formation. For the basic assumptions, see Robert Stein, 'Nationale identiteiten in de late Middeleeuwen. Een verkenning', *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 28 (2002), 222–246.

[5] In a formal sense, the county of Burgundy also belonged to the 'Burgundian Circle'. Due to its remote location, it was not included in the Leiden project.

be—free and lordless. In 2001, funding for the project was awarded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

To present the findings of the research team, and place these in a comparative perspective, a conference about the development of identities in the Low Countries was organised in March 2007, by Judith Pollmann and Robert Stein. The conference brought together the co-workers of the project, Sjoerd Bijker, Aart Noordzij, Justine Smithuis and Robert Stein, and a group of international specialists to discuss the formation of identities in the Low Countries and the neighbouring countries. This volume is the outcome of that conference.

I

Some readers may ask whether it is viable or useful to consider 'national' identities in the medieval and early modern periods. At the moment, the concepts 'nation' and 'national identity' are more or less monopolised by historians and sociologists who believe that they should be treated as particular to the modern period—even if the term 'nation' was borrowed from the Middle Ages. As Eric Hobsbawm puts it: 'The "nation"… belongs exclusively to a particular, and historically recent, period.'[6] When modernists acknowledge identity formation in the Middle Ages and early modern period as a legitimate topic at all, it is not taken very seriously. Medievalists and early modernists who work on identity formation are treated, to quote Rees Davies, 'like young children at an adult evening party', who 'can be allowed to introduce themselves briefly before the main business of the evening gets under way.'[7] Many medievalists and early modernists do not agree. They think that forms of allegiance to one's peers, to the government or prince and to the land, are of all times, and should be considered as a form of common and even national identity, even if they are aware that the use of concepts like 'nation' is not unproblematic.

[6] E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780. Programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge, 1990), 9.

[7] Rees Davies, 'Nations and national identities in the medieval world. An apologia', *Revue belge d'histoire contemporaine* 34 (2004), 567–579, at 567.

In the first essay in this volume Peter Hoppenbrouwers discusses the theoretical background of research into pre-modern identities.[8] Hoppenbrouwers explores the applicability of sociological or anthropological concepts, like 'ethnie', 'nation' or 'national identity' to the Middle Ages. Contrary to modernists and sociologists, he argues that these can be applied to pre-modern history, even if with restrictions. He emphasises the volatile character of identities, over place and over time, and shows that sensible and careful use of concepts developed by social scientists is possible and helpful. In his paper, Hoppenbrouwers stresses the importance of boundary situations; it is especially in confrontations with strangers that we are forced to define ourselves.

How did such common identities come into existence before there was a modern state to 'imagine' and impose them? Starting from the presupposition that identities are often expressed by culture, Robert Stein investigates the cultural interaction between the towns of the Low Countries. He does not take the existing political boundaries as a point of departure, but establishes a network of interurban exchange, starting in the frontier-zone of northern France and the southern Low Countries in the twelfth century, and gradually extending in the course of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries over northern Flanders, Brabant, Hainault, Holland and Zeeland. The implication is that some of the core values that determined the identity of the Dutch Republic, as a successor-state to the Seventeen Low Countries, originated in the urban world of the south and were gradually accepted in the north.[9]

The contributions by Justine Smithuis, Sjoerd Bijker and Aart Noordzij examine the existence and survival of regional identities in the Netherlandish territories of Friesland, Brabant and Guelders. Though they take different points of departure, the three papers make it clear that regional identities were very much alive in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Regional identity is perhaps reflected in its most pure

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[8] See for instance: Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and communities in Western Europe, 900–1300* (Oxford, 1984), 250–331; Rees Davies, 'Nations and national identities', passim; Joachim Ehlers, 'Was sind und wie bilden sich Nationes im mittelalterlichen Europa (10.–15. Jahrhundert)?', in *Mittelalterliche nationes—neuzeitliche Nationen. Probleme der Nationenbildung in Europa*, ed. Almut Bues and Rex Rexheuser (Wiesbaden, 1995), 7–26.

[9] Compare: Martin van Gelderen, 'De Nederlandse Opstand (1555–1610). Van "vrijheden" naar "oude vrijheid" en de "vrijheid der conscientien"', in *Vrijheid. Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende tot de twintigste eeuw*, ed. W.O.G. Haitsma Mulier and W.R.E. Velema, Nederlandse begripsgeschiedenis 2 (Amsterdam, 1999), 27–52, at 29.

sense in Frisian historiography. In her essay, Justine Smithuis describes a complex of related chronicles, the *Gesta*-cycle that comprised a rich legacy of mythical episodes, in which Charlemagne plays a major role. It functioned in the legitimisation of the lordless autonomy, the 'Friese Vrijheid', Frisian liberty. Friesland was depicted as the promised land of an elected people. In short, the *Gesta*-cycle reflects the 'imagined community' of the Frisian people. Sjoerd Bijker shows us how a comparable Brabantine identity was fostered by a historiographical invention from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, concerning the mythical figure of Brabon. In the late Middle Ages Brabant considered itself to be one of the most distinguished principalities of the Christian world, not because of its political power or economic strength, but because of the fame of its dynasty, that was related to the Trojans, and Carolingians. Bijker discusses the Brabon-cycle, which functioned as a link between the ducal dynasty, a more or less clearly delineated territory and, of course, the duchy's name. The Brabon-cycle therefore reflects the existence of a Brabantine nation. Still, the attitude shown in the cycle is also ambiguous, for besides a bolstering of the Brabant identity, the Brabon-myth signifies the legitimation of the Burgundian dynasty in its capacity as duke of Brabant as well.[10] Guelders' identity, on the contrary, was to a large degree determined by feelings of hostility to the Burgundians—both the dukes and their subjects—as Aart Noordzij explains in his essay. Guelders cherished an age-old enmity against the neighbouring principality of Brabant and when the house of Burgundy succeeded to the Brabant dukedom, this did not recede. Noordzij shows that the Nijmegen canon Willem van Berchen in the second half of the fifteenth century and the Arnhem humanist Henricus Aquilius, a century later, emphasised the attachment of the duchy and people of Guelders to the Holy Roman Empire, as opposed to the western, Burgundian sphere of influence.[11]

Strong local traditions like these were unlikely to evaporate at the arrival of a new regime. And even if they were gradually united under one ruling house during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Low Countries essentially remained a mosaic of principalities, lordships

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[10] Compare: Robert Stein, *Politiek en historiografie. Het ontstaansmilieu van Brabantse kronieken in de eerste helft van de vijftiende eeuw*, Miscellanea Neerlandica 10 (Leuven, 1994), 250–264.

[11] See the thesis by G.A. Noordzij, *Gelre. Dynastie, land en identiteit in de late Middeleeuwen* (Hilversum, 2009).

and towns, forming a far more complex accumulation of collective identities. Princes and their agents were faced with the task of trying to create new forms of loyalty. Next in this volume, we therefore discuss the role of the state in relation to its subjects, as propagator of new identities. The state played an important role in the development of identities, after all; in many cases, and increasingly so, it functioned as the main frame of reference for identities. The apparent congruency of nation and state has led many modernists to believe that nations were exclusively created by the state; the nation, in their view, is a top-down creation, that was called into being by the modern state in its aim to maximise its power. To quote Eric Hobsbawm:

> [The nation] is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the 'nation-state'… nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way around.[12]

The contributions in this volume only partially support this point of view. They show us that the development of identities related to the state is to be understood as the result of interaction between government and subjects.

The issue is most explicitly addressed by Anne-Laure Van Bruaene. When she examines the performance of Habsburg power in the Low Countries, she shows that the identities were not simply imposed by the regime and accepted by its subjects. How should we evaluate the role of the government? Previous scholars borrowed Clifford Geertz's concept of the theatre state and applied it to the Burgundian Netherlands of the fifteenth century, yet Van Bruaene shows that the Habsburg princes of the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries outdid their Burgundian forebears in exploiting the possibilities for image-building. Even more than their predecessors, they participated in the cultural expressions of the urban world, instead of confronting it with (military) force. The princes appeared in person at the public festivals, and started to patronise the major literary societies, the chambers of rhetoric. Thus they communicated the image of able and devout rulers that they had inherited from the Burgundian dukes. This policy, however, was not just in the interest of the princes, but also in that of the

[12] Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism*, 10.

urban elites who organised the events. These were the mainstays of the Habsburg power, but also dependent on its support. Paradoxically, the Habsburg theatre state not only fostered an overarching identity that was associated with their dynasty, but also reinforced the tendency to localism.

While Van Bruaene considers the interchange between princes, urban elites and subjects in the establishment of shared identities in peacetime, in the contributions by Steven Gunn, David Potter and Peter Arnade, the importance of warfare for the development of identities is discussed. 'War shaped identity', Steven Gunn remarks, 'not only because one had to decide what one's own side was called, but also who were the enemy'. Here, the role of government is more important, for it had to prove that the war was necessary, legitimate, and served a common cause. In his contribution, Gunn focusses on the Low Countries between 1475–1550, when a long series of wars was fought for which the Burgundian and Habsburg governments expected the support of their subjects. A large array of media was used to muster such support, ranging from exemplary punishment of traitors to an intensive reporting of the wartime activities, the printing of polemical songs and the performance of processions in order to invoke divine aid for victory or peace. The initiative may have come from the regime, but the cooperation of the local—urban—authorities was a *conditio sine qua non*. These had an agenda of their own, stressing their longing for peace contrary to the prince's desire for victory. Gunn argues that warfare not only necessitated loyalty from those actually involved in the hostilities, but also required that of the home front, which was encouraged to show its involvement through commemorations, processions and, of course, by offering generous financial support. In the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, war was fought on an ever larger scale, and as a consequence the individual provinces were no longer able to defend themselves. Cooperation was necessary, Gunn argues, between 'different provinces, townsmen and countrymen, noblemen and urban elites, local populations and the foreign soldiers their prince sent to defend them.' At first it was primarily loyalty to the prince that was encouraged, and thus he became the focal point, the ultimate symbol, of a shared identity in the Low Countries. Things changed however, when the Habsburg territories expanded in the late fifteenth century, and the prince was usually absent. Then, the feelings of solidarity were increasingly associated with the Low Countries as a

territorial entity, even if imperial majesty remained an extremely powerful symbol.

Comparable means of persuasion were used by the main foes of the Burgundian Habsburgs. In France, as David Potter shows us in his contribution, the government also tried to convince the populace of the necessity of war and taxation, by using circular letters, printed ordinances and declarations. Even if medieval France was less of a proto-absolute, centralised monarchy than we used to think, the level of centralisation and institutional organisation was far higher than that in the Low Countries. This is also reflected in the French policy towards the creation of identities. Colette Beaune has demonstrated how in France, a process of (political) centralisation took place from the thirteenth century onwards, which resulted in the development of what we can call a royal ideology, with a clear consciousness of the French territory and people.[13] In his contribution, David Potter shows how the need to raise support for war moved the Renaissance monarchs of France to 'engage with educated public opinion'. They did so very effectively. Historians, poets and pamphleteers obliged by elaborating on, and glorifying, the French war effort and especially the role of the king, and so contributed to the widening spread of a national consciousness.

Whereas Anne-Laure van Bruaene, Steven Gunn and David Potter focus on the attempts of the princes to persuade, Peter Arnade addresses their repressive side. During their advent in the Low Countries, the Burgundian dukes and their Habsburg successors repeatedly met with fierce resistance, in the first instance especially from towns, like Ghent, Bruges and Liège and in a later stage by principalities, like Luxemburg and Guelders, which resisted conquest. Most often, rebellious subjects were punished with a financial *amende*. Yet in confrontations with the towns, especially those that repeated their rebellious conduct, the dukes also inflicted violent penalities, ranging from public humiliation to complete destruction.[14] Eventually, Arnade believes, the snake bit its own tail. While the prince may have considered such exemplary

[13] Colette Beaune, *Naissance de la nation France* (Paris, 1985); Bernd Schneidmüller, 'Constructing identities of medieval France', in *France in the central Middle Ages*, ed. Marcus Bull (Oxford, 2002), 15–42.

[14] Marc Boone, 'Destroying and reconstructing the city. The inculcation and arrogation of princely power in the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands (14th–16th centuries)', in *The propagation of power in the medieval west*, ed. M. Gosman, A. Vanderjagt and J. Veenstra (Groningen, 1997), 1–33.

punishments as the ultimate affirmation of his sovereign power, his subjects remembered them as symbols of tyranny. The destruction and the victims of repression were mourned in pamphlets that heralded martial resistance of townsmen, so that the harsh penalties often developed into virtual *lieux de mémoire*, thereby contributing to future resistance, legitimising revolt, and creating identities adverse to the princely interest and ego.

In the final section of this volume, Alastair Duke, Judith Pollmann and Robert von Friedeburg explore how appeals to the 'fatherland' could come to fuel resistance against superior powers, and examine the role of new concepts of patriotism as these emerged after the Dutch Revolt and spread to Germany. By contrast with the concept of nation, *patria* is more politicised, more inclusive, and more all-encompassing. It not only refers to the love for one's fatherland, but also to the obligations arising from this love. The word *patria* was used frequently in ancient and medieval texts as a more or less factual indication of the town—or land—where one was born. Both in Germany and the Low Countries, from the fourteenth century it was increasingly used as a reference to one's emotional fatherland, and from the late sixteenth century onwards the concept of *patria* really expanded and 'patriot' became a common term.[15]

Alastair Duke shows that when the Low Countries rose in rebellion against Philip II in the 1570s, the rebels often called themselves 'patriots'. To what extent did they have a notion of a common *patria*? Duke examines the level of cohesion that existed in the Low Countries during the third quarter of the sixteenth century. Was a Netherlandish consciousness broadly shared, or was it just the rallying cry of a small group of separatists? In other words, to what extent had the Seventeen Netherlands as a 'functioning state' managed to establish itself amongst the multiplicity of identities that the inhabitants cherished?

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[15] Robert von Friedeburg, '"Patria" und "Patrioten" vor dem Patriotismus. Pflichten, Rechte, Glauben und die Rekonfugurierung europäischer Gemeinwesen im 17. Jahrhundert', in *'Patria' und 'Patrioten' vor dem Patriotismus. Pflichten, Rechte, Glauben und die Rekonfugurierung europäischer Gemeinwesen im 17. Jahrhundert*, Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung 41, ed. Robert von Friedeburg (Wiesbaden, 2005), 7–54, here 12–13; Joep Leerssen, *Nationaal denken in Europa. Een cultuurhistorische schets* (Amsterdam, 1999), 15; Karin Tilmans, 'De ontwikkeling van een vaderland-begrip in de laat-middeleeuwse en vroeg-moderne geschiedschrijving van de Nederlanden', in *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*, ed. N.C.F. van Sas (Amsterdam, 1999), 7–53. Compare the contribution by Robert von Friedeburg in the present volume.

Duke shows that, despite all the differences between them, by the mid-sixteenth century the Seventeen Provinces had also adopted a common culture, that was perhaps best characterised by their shared commitment to notions of liberty, by which they meant their 'liberties': the charters and privileges that represented and symbolised their freedom. Furthermore, a common enemy was recognised in the kingdom of France. Still, insofar as a shared 'Netherlandish' identity had emerged, it was fledgling and unstable, and the attachment to 'liberties' was as much a particularist and centrifugal force, as a unifying one. It was ultimately the combined propaganda efforts of William of Orange and his associates that consolidated the notion of a common fatherland, the *patria* of the Seventeen Low Countries.

The survival of the ideal of the Seventeen Low Countries in the early seventeenth century is addressed by Judith Pollmann. With the hindsight of the historian we can establish that the separation between North and South was a military and political fact with Antwerp's surrender to the Habsburg armies in 1585. Both north and south of the border, reunification of the Netherlands remained an important war aim that was expressed in pamphlets, maps, songs and sermons. However, as Pollmann shows in her contribution, this ideal was inevitably complicated by the growing mutual distrust between the two new warring Netherlandish camps, which forced the re examination of notions of Netherlandishness. By now both northerners and southerners referred to a *patria* that was no longer a land, but a *fata morgana*; most of all, however, it establishes how strong the consciousness of a common fatherland had established itself in the remarkable short period of circa half a century.

In its extreme fragmentation, the Holy Roman resembled the Low Countries, albeit on a far larger and far more complicated scale. The territories of the Empire greatly differed in population density, economic makeup and administrative organisation. Moreover, in contrast to France, the Empire had no lasting ruling dynasty, no recognisable centre and virtually no central administration that could serve as a stable point of focus for evolving identities. There was no state that could create a consistent overarching state ideology.[16] Was the

[16] For an overview of the siatuation with regard to identities in medieval Germany, see: Pierre Monnet, 'La patria médiévale vue d'Allemagne, entre construction impériale et identités régionales', *Le Moyen Âge* 107 (2001), 71–99.

emperor lord of the Christian world, the *Imperium*, of the *Regnum Allemaniae* or of just his own patrimonial territories?[17] Identification with the emperor, and the Empire that is, was affected by the physical distance: Peter Moraw has aptly distinguished these approaches as 'königsnah—königsoffen—königsfern'.[18]

In his contribution to the present volume, Robert von Friedeburg argues that a clear intensification of German consciousness took place in the fifteenth century, in the context of the wars with France, the Ottomans and with the dukes of Burgundy. The *Reichsreform* of 1495 marked an important turning point, as it created a more or less clear administrative and territorial structure. A more abstract form of identity established itself from the sixteenth century onwards, when the concepts *patria* and 'nation' became en vogue. The notion of a common fatherland further evolved in circles of the intellectual and administrative elites. It emerged in pamphlets, especially in those written and spread by Lutherans, who wanted to legitimise their opposition to the emperor by presenting it as a fight for the interests of the common fatherland. Yet, especially after the Dutch Revolt, it was territorial princes who were to use most effectively the concept of *patria* in order to oppose centralist ambitions within the Empire.

II

The Low Countries present us with a very rich case of identity formation. In rapidly changing political circumstances, identities, too, proved dynamic; continually reinvented and manipulated in order to legitimise the existing situation or to mobilise forces to attain new goals. There was also a remarkable continuity in the use of traditions, ideologies and symbols. The essays in this volume offer a fascinating insight into the continuities and discontinuities in the formation of (national) identities in the Low Countries and its neighbouring countries. They show how new identities were created, or developed, how

[17] For a useful overview of the German problems, see Karl-Friedrich Krieger, *König, Reich und Reichsreform im Spätmittelalter*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 14 (Munich, 1992).

[18] Peter Moraw, 'Franken als königsnahe Landschaft im späten Mittelalter', *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 112 (1976), 123–138.

old ones survived, and how novel ones came into being when new states emerged.

Moreover, some more general patterns emerge, the significance of which extends beyond the territorial framework of the Netherlands. The first is the importance of historiographical traditions and of the images and symbols attached to them, creating dynastic, territorial or ethnic continuities. In the scholarship on medieval historiography a distinction is often made between what Germans call *Zeitgeschichte,* the remarkable events of one's own time, and *Vergangenheitsgeschichte*, the (often mythical) history of a common descent, of heroic deeds and fatal destinies, that happened long-ago.[19] While historians have always appreciated *Zeitgeschichte*, since it allowed them to reconstruct the (political) events as they 'really happened', *Vergangenheitsgeschichte* has long been regarded with suspicion, as the irrelevant fabrications of credulous medieval scribes, who were not able to distinguish fact from fiction and who uncritically borrowed from older sources. For those studying the development of identities, however, these fabrications are of major importance. After all, an awareness of sharing the same past is the nucleus of a collective identity, because for a community it expresses the vital continuity from past to present on to a (hopefully glorious) shared future. This not only applies to modern identities, but also to those existing in pre-modern times.[20] More general, comparative research into the spread of 'mythical traditions' would offer a more profound insight into the development of identities in Europe.[21] Still, as David Potter shows, the importance of *Zeitgeschichte* as 'argument' in the creation of national symbols should not be underestimated, especially when its production was managed in close cooperation with the government.

Secondly, freedom or liberty is a recurring theme in the contributions. Historians have long been aware of the importance of liberties, the larger and smaller privileges of lordships, towns and provinces in Netherlandish culture. One of the main reasons for the Dutch Revolt was a growing sense that the central government aimed to curb the

[19] F.-J. Schmale, *Funktion und Formen mittelalterlicher Geschichtsschreibung* (Darmstadt, 1985), 87–104.

[20] Davies, *The first English empire*, 41.

[21] See for instance: Juliane Kümmel, 'Errinnern und Vergessen in der Stadt. Überlegungen zu Formen spätmittelalterlicher Wahrnehmung anhand von Ansätzen volkssprachlicher Stadtgeschichtsschreibung im nördlichen Frankreich', *Saeculum* 35 (1984), 225–245.

'liberties and privileges'. In cities, urban liberties could form the core of local identities, and the same may apply to principalities like Brabant. However, there was more to liberty than just liberties, as is shown by several of the contributions presented here. 'Liberty' could also refer more generally to the right to self-determination, the freedom of the arbitrary dealings of others. In the early middle ages, liberty was an individual attribute, but in the later medieval period it developed into a collective value, especially in the urban areas of Europe, in Northern Italy, Northern France, Southern Germany and the Low Countries.[22] Influential medieval theorists like Thomas Aquinas, Henry de Bracton and William of Ockham discussed the value of liberty in a more general sense, attaching Christian and legal meanings to it. Several papers in this volume show that liberty, understood as the right of self-determination, formed an important element in regional identities.[23] Most explicitly this was the case in Friesland, where the 'Friese vrijheid' formed the heart of the regional imagined community. This freedom was partly rooted in Christian traditions, partly in the 'constitutional culture' associated with the Frisian laws that were allegedly promulgated by Charlemagne. Yet freedom was also one of the characteristic virtues of the Brabanters. After all, weren't they descendants of the free Franks?[24] And hadn't they formalised their freedom in the *joyeuse entrée*? Comparable ideals existed in Guelders and elsewhere in the Low Countries, as well as in the Holy Roman Empire. Interestingly, people were likely to argue that they were freer than their neighbours, as we can see by comparing the papers of Alastair Duke and Aart Noordzij. For the inhabitants of Guelders, the Empire symbolised privileges, freedom and independence, but for the inhabitants of the

[22] Antony Black, *Political thought in Europe, 1250–1450* (Cambridge, 1992), 28–31; Martin van Gelderen and Wim Blockmans, 'Het klassieke en middeleeuwse erfgoed. Politieke vrijheid van de Romeinse Republiek tot de Bourgondische Nederlanden', in *Vrijheid*, 11–25, at 14–15; Bernard Diestelkamp, 'Freiheit der Bürger—Freiheit der Stadt', in *Die abendländische Freiheit vom 10. zum 14. Jahrhundert. Der Wirkungszusammenhang von Idee und Wirklichkeit im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. Johannes Fried, Vorträge und Forschungen 39 (Sigmaringen, 1991), 485–510, at 492–493.

[23] The (longing for) sovereignty is considered to be one of the important constituent elements of the nation. See: Walter Schlesinger, 'Die Entstehung der Nationen. Gedanken zu einem Forschungsprogramm', in *Aspekte der Nationenbildung im Mittelalter*, ed. Helmut Beumann and Werner Schröder (Sigmaringen, 1979), 11–62, at 57–58; Adrian Hastings, *The construction of nationhood. Ethnicity, religion and nationalism* (Cambridge/New York, 1997), 25.

[24] *Die alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant* (Antwerp, 1497), f. B4r.

(western parts of) the Low Countries it was a region characterised by feudal relations and oppression. To many, France was a land of centralisation, servitude and tyranny. At the same time, the French themselves suspected that the Germans wanted to reduce them to perpetual servitude, as David Potter explains.

A third conclusion concerns the role of language. In current theory about nations and national identities, language is considered to be one of the most important identity-markers.[25] Medieval thinkers would have agreed. In 1140, Bernard, bishop of St David's in Wales, for instance, defined a nation as 'a people distinct by language, laws, habits, modes of judgement and customs.'[26] How did this work in the Low Countries, a territory, inhabited by people speaking different languages? Most scholars assume that a language border is a major hindrance to the development of a shared identity.[27] However, one of the striking observations of the essays in this volume is the fact that language appears to be of minor importance as a marker of identity—at least in the case of the Low Countries. Although there are a few signs that the inhabitants of Flanders were opposed to an administration that did not speak the Flemish language, there is virtually no trace of an identity formation based on language, constructing in-groups and out-groups.[28] In fact, most evidence points to the ease with which people communicated across languages, apparently understanding each other well enough to do business and work together.

A fourth finding concerns the role of a wide range of media in the spread and consolidation of identities.[29] Anne-Laure van Bruaene and

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[25] In general, see for instance: František Graus, *Lebendige Vergangenheit. Überlieferung im Mittelalter und in den Vorstellungen vom Mittelalter* (Cologne/Vienna, 1975), 73–75; Josep R. Llobera, *The god of modernity. The development of nationalism in Western Europe* (Oxford, 1994), 4; Hastings, *The construction of nationhood*, 3; J. Stone, 'Ethnicity', in *Social science encyclopedia* (London/New York, 1996), 260–262, at 261; Schlesinger, 'Die Entstehung der Nationen', 57–58. See also the contribution by Peter Hoppenbrouwers in the present volume.

[26] Hastings, *The construction of nationhood*, 17.

[27] For the Low Countries: Ludo Beheydt, *Eén en toch apart. Kunst en cultuur van de Nederlanden* (Leuven, 2002); H.W. von der Dunk, 'Het vraagstuk van de Nederlandse identiteit', in *Cultureel alfa-bètisme in Nederland*, ed. H.C. Cassee and D.J. van de Kaa (Amsterdam, 1989), 59–79, at 60.

[28] Joep Leerssen, 'Medieval heteronomy, modern nationalism. Language assertion between Liège and Maastricht, 14th–20th century', *Revue belge d'histoire contemporaine* 34 (2004), 581–593.

[29] Jacoba van Leeuwen, 'Introduction', in *Symbolic communication in late medieval towns*, ed. Jacoba van Leeuwen, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia series 1, studia 37 (Leuven, 2006), vii–xx.

Robert Stein emphasise the importance of public spectacles, like processions, shooting-festivals and stage-competitions. These public performances enabled princes and governments to reach a large audience, while at the same time the urban elites could solicit the moral and political support of the princes, in order to impress the population.[30] Recent scholarship has questioned earlier assumptions that royal entries gradually became an affair of the elites only, and has pointed to the entries as a continued opportunity for local communities to express their wish lists to the prince.[31] In the second half of the sixteenth century, print was used as a new medium for identity formation. Alastair Duke and Judith Pollmann both point to the importance of the efforts by William of Orange and his circle to mobilise public opinion for their cause by defining a common enemy for a common *patria*. As we can see in the essays by Robert von Friedeburg and David Potter, the role of print was equally important in the Empire and in France. The advent of the printing press accelerated public debate, and created new opportunities, especially for pamphleteering. Pamphlets could reach a large audience and they remained of crucial importance in the political culture of the Dutch Republic.[32] Even so, it is important to acknowledge that argumentative pamphleteering was often the medium of those who did not have control over public space.[33] Thus it was not the Dutch state, but opponents of the government-backed peace proposals, who in the seventeenth century did most to define new notions of Netherlandishness in the Dutch Republic.[34]

Famously, Charles Tilly attributed the development of the modern state to 'war and the preparation for war'.[35] As a fifth conclusion we can establish that this maxim is, in part at least, also true for the formation of identities, for the importance of warfare is underlined in various contributions in the present volume. It appears that, in

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[30] Hugo Soly, 'Plechtige intochten in de steden van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de overgang van Middeleeuwen naar Nieuwe Tijd. Communicatie, propaganda, spektakel', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 97 (1984), 341–361, at 343.

[31] Margit Thøfner, *A common art. Urban ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle, 2007); compare: Soly, 'Plechtige intochten', 343.

[32] Matthijs van Otegem, 'Tijd, snelheid, afstand. De mechanica van het pamflet', *Zeventiende eeuw* 17 (2001), 50–61.

[33] A point made by Monica Stensland, *Habsburg public communication in the Dutch Revolt* (Oxford, unpublished doctoral thesis, 2008).

[34] Judith Pollmann, *Het oorlogsverleden van de Gouden Eeuw* (Leiden, inaugural lecture, 2008).

[35] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990–1992* (Cambridge MA; Oxford, 1992), 14–15 and passim.

wartime, governments are more inclined to indoctrinate their subjects, in order to stimulate their loyalty and especially to raise more finances. With the creation of strong images of the enemy—who may be lurking inside or outside the state—a common cause and mutual cohesion was strengthened as well. In this respect it is interesting to recall Peter Hoppenbrouwers' suggestion, that border-situations were of primary importance for the development of identities.

Finally, this collection allows us to draw attention to the ambiguous role that the prince could play in identity formation. On the one hand, dynastic traditions were vital to the development of identities, as can be seen in France, in England and in the different principalities of the Low Countries. Princes themselves fostered the development of new territorial identities, and their subjects were often willing to see them as the symbol of their community. Often, they played the role—sometimes literally—that urban elites and higher nobility expected of them.[36] Yet once they had come into existence, new identities might be difficult to control and could also come to haunt ruling overlords. When Philip II in 1549 made his *tour des Pays-Bas*, he may have been aware that he played the leading role in a stage-play that was directed by others. The importance of the formal act of swearing the provincial rights can scarcely have escaped him. Yet he cannot have foreseen that the consciousness of a Netherlandish union, as propagated by his father, would soon be used by his subjects to promote a revolt against himself. In 1549, he was welcomed as a Saviour, as a modern pendant to David, Charlemagne or Arthur, as a protector of the privileges and as the ultimate fighter against the infidel. Thirty years later, however, Philip was reviled as an enemy of the Netherlandish *patria*.[37]

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[36] Compare: Robert Stein, 'Cultuur in context. Het spel van Menych Sympel (1466) als spiegel van de Brusselse politieke verhoudingen', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 113 (1998), 289–321. Here Charles the Bold literally plays a role in a stage play organised by the Brussels municipality.

[37] Daniel R. Horst, *De opstand in zwart-wit. Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand 1566–1584* (Zutphen, 2003), passim.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DYNAMICS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

Peter Hoppenbrouwers

Nations and ethnies

Nation and identity surely are among the most frequently discussed concepts in recent historiography, but this does not allow an historian to take these two key terms for granted.[1] So, what are nations, and how do they shape identities? To paraphrase one of Anthony Smith's many definitions, a nation is a people living in some well-defined territory that shares an awareness of a common past as well as expectations about a common future.[2] In this generalised sense a nation is not that different from an ethnic group, or ethnic community/ethnie—the terms Smith prefers to describe 'a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members.'[3] Both terms refer to a people; the main difference is in a nation's higher degree of territorialisation and politicisation. Nations are politicised expressions of ethnicity. Or, seen from yet another angle, while ethnies are more cultural entities, nations are more political. And whereas ethnies display 'some

[1] A Google search on Identity AND History gave almost 70 million hits, a search on Nation AND History almost 24 million. National AND Identity produced circa 153 million hits.

[2] Cf. Anthony D. Smith, *The antiquity of nations* (Cambridge/Malden MA, 2004), 245: 'The concept of "nation"… may be defined as a named human population occupying a historic territory, and sharing common myths and memories, a distinctive public culture, common laws and customs'. On page 129 of the same book there is an even more elaborate definition.

[3] John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, 'Introduction', in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford/New York, 1996), 3–14, at 6. Obviously, 'people' has a more general, and for that reason also more ambiguous, meaning than either nation or ethnic group, because 'people' can refer to both the citizens of a nation-state, the members of a nation and the members of an ethnic community.

sentiments of solidarity, at least among the elites', nations are characterised by clear, far less noncommittal, 'common rights and duties for all members'.[4] By implication, nations, eventually, are in need of heavier ideological support than ethnic groups. And although one can speak of ethnocentrism as an ideological drive to preserve a specific (ethnic) culture, such a movement will by definition be less powerful than 'nationalism', which aims to attain and maintain 'autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a group deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential "nation"'.[5]

Nations can originate along two different tracks. They may arise as ethnic groups striving for their own autonomy or state, as with the Kurdish nation or people. This process is usually called 'the politicisation of ethnicity'. An alternative process, referred to as 'national integration' arises from multi-ethnic polities posing as mono-ethnic peoples. A good example here is the American nation or people.[6] Each of these paths or processes generates a different type of nation with its own form of nationalism. National integration breeds political/civic nations because, here, national identification is centred on political and/or civic values; its concomitant 'civic' nationalism focusses on a common commitment to civil society, its values, its institutions, its way of life, and its expectations of a (bright) common future. Politicisation of ethnicity, on the other hand, generates ethnic/cultural nations because in the self-understanding of non-state nations ethnic and cultural values prevail.[7] Their ethnic (i.e. cultural) nationalism focusses on

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[4] Smith, *Antiquity*, 18.

[5] Smith, *Antiquity*, 243–245; Anthony D. Smith, *The nation in history. Historiographical debates about ethnicity and nationalism* (Oxford, 2000), 72–73. For the concept of ethnicism, e.g. Hutchinson and Smith, 'Introduction', 5; Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking ethnicity. Arguments and explorations* (London, 1997), 84–87.

[6] Alternatively, Anthony Smith likes to distinguish 'bureaucratic incorporation' from 'vernacular mobilization'. Anthony D. Smith, *National identity* (London, 1991), ch. 3, and Smith, *The nation in history*, 71–72. Politicisation of ethnicity is called 'autonomist nationalism' by Andrew W. Orridge and Colin H. Williams, 'Autonomist nationalism. A theoretical framework for spatial variations in its genesis and development', *Political geography quarterly* 1 (1982), 19–39, at 20.

[7] The distinction goes back to the work of Friedrich Meinecke at the beginning of the twentieth century. Cf. Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without groups* (Cambridge MA/London, 2004), ch. 6; Smith, *The nation in history*, 15–20. Also: David Brown, *Contemporary nationalism. Civic, ethnocultural and multicultural politics* (London/New York, 2000), ch. 2 and 3. Cf. Felicita Medved, 'Nation and patria in the emerging world order', *Geojournal* 43 (1997), 5–15, at 11, distinguishes two concepts of 'people', indicated respectively as 'demos' and 'ethnos', the former meaning a group of citizens

the past, on myths of common history and common ancestry. In the context of modern European history these two types are best represented by France and Germany respectively, according to Calhoun, and in the context of our contemporary world by Western Europe, and Eastern Europe and the Middle East respectively, according to Smith.[8]

Too easily the politicisation track is seen as negative, primitive, or pernicious, as fostering a pseudo kinship bond. The integration track, on the contrary, is regarded as positive, or modern, thereby fostering a particular type of state. In fact, ultimately both processes contain recipes for disaster. We see attempts at national integration going hand in hand with marginalising, discouraging, or sometimes even actively suppressing expressions of 'real' ethnic feelings on a subnational level. In particular there are politicised ethnic groups that resist their incorporation into a state (or into more than one state) and turn into highly organised and militarised movements striving for regional autonomy or even complete 'national' independence—think of the Basques or the Kurds. However, if such groups are successful, the victors in their turn tend to take a hard line against any minorities living in their new state's territory. It is this tendency towards national closure and ethnic exclusion that encapsulates one of the quintessential tragedies of the modern world, which is the ambition to let states (political communities) coincide with ethnies (cultural communities), whereas usually both types of communities, for all kinds of historical reasons, are incongruous.[9]

(or: members/subjects of a state), the latter referring to a 'culture community' (or: members of an ethnic group).

[8] E.g. Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Minneapolis, 1997), 89; Smith, *The nation in history*, 72.

[9] Smith, *National identity*, 17–18; Smith, *The nation in history*, 18–20. Brown, *Contemporary nationalism*, 62, argues that this insight, as so many others, goes back to Max Weber. Smith, *Antiquity*, 239, points to the historian and publisher Lord Acton (1834–1902). Cf. Gellner's famous definition of nationalism as 'a political principle which holds that the political unit and the national unit should be congruent'. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford, 1983), 1.

'Primordial' versus 'constructivist' qualities of ethnies and nations

There are two quite different ways of looking at ethnic groups or nations: either they are seen as fixed, lasting, and transcultural features of human societies, embedded in their social structures; or as ideas, as products of the mind as well as of voluntary association, liable to fast change, to 'construction' and political (ab)use. Consequently, social scientists usually make a basic distinction between a 'primordialist' and an 'instrumentalist' approach, even if their understanding of these terms is far from unequivocal, which finds expression in the fact that there are various flavours of each approach.[10] Moreover, at first sight, primordialism is a concept that is difficult to reconcile with that of nation, because by definition 'politicising' cannot be something 'primordial'. The crucial point, however, is that nationalists have, as it were, colonised ethnicity by making such primordial features as (quasi-)kinship and descent, and attachment to blood and land, into an essential part of nationalist rhetoric and of the nation's representation at its centre.

If we stick to Smith's broad definition, the primordialist view links up with the structural-functionalist idea that certain basic elements of any human society serve a benevolent function which contributes to the structure's endurance in the long term. For that reason, ethnic groups and/or nations have built-in mechanisms, aiming at the conservation as well as the reproduction and transmission of those values, beliefs and modes of behaviour that are considered to embody their collective identity. Such values and beliefs have both cognitive and affective features, in other words, their transmission comprises both knowledge and emotions.[11] The transmission can be intergenerational—

[10] Terminology is not very consistent. Approximate alternatives to primordialism are 'perennialism' and 'essentialism', while from a conceptual-historical point of view it has 'three broad strands': an organicist, a sociobiological (or neo-Darwinian), and a cultural (connected to the work of Clifford Geertz) strand. The approximate alternative to instrumentalism most often used is 'constructivism', with 'situationalism' and 'ethnosymbolism' as sub-strands. For a general overview: Anthony D. Smith, *The nation in history*.

[11] Steven Grosby, 'The inexpugnable tie of primordiality', in *Ethnicity*, 54–55. For the connection between a primordialist view of ethnicity and a specific mode of production, resp. the filling of an economic niche, see Florin Curta, 'From Kossinna to Bromley. Ethnogenesis in Slavic archaeology', in *On barbarian identity. Critical approaches to ethnicity in the early Middle Ages*, ed. Andrew Gillett (Turnhout, 2002), 201–218, at 213–214, referring to such Soviet sociologists as Julian Bromley; and

and in that case is part of the socialisation of children—or intercultural, as when newcomers (marriage partners from outside; immigrants) are subject to processes of integration during which they are more or less forced to abandon key cultural values (e.g. language, religion). In accordance with the primordialist view both ethnies and nations are often represented as kinship groups generating a family feeling as part of a vaguer sense of belonging.[12]

Whereas primordialists have a rather static and objectivist view of ethnicity in the sense that individual social actors are constrained and have relatively little influence on their ethnicity, the instrumentalists stress its fluidity and flexibility. They see ethnicity as 'a resource employed by the members of ethnic groups for the pursuit of their common interests';[13] if necessary they adapt to changing situations. From the constructivist angle, ethnicity—and in this case the same goes for nationality—is something to a large degree 'constructed' or 'engineered'; ethnies and, even more so, nations are 'imagined communities', in Benedict Anderson's felicitous qualification.[14] This view subordinates ethnicity or nationality to power games, to political manipulation or political strategy, and to ideological convictions, all directed to legitimising either social inequalities or existing power structures, or else dominance over others or by others.[15]

Smith is rather critical of the radical pretension and the artificial, a-historical, ultimately presentist, purport of the constructivist view while, on the other hand, he certainly recognises some of the merits of the primordialist viewpoint.[16] This balanced stance is in accordance with critics who have lately warned against a lopsided preference for the instrumentalist viewpoint in analysing premodern ethnicity, because it projects our contemporary, postmodern preoccupation with uninhibited liberty to choose and to construct our own personal lives

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Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and nationalism. Anthropological perspectives* (2nd edition; London/Terling VA, 2002), 44–45, referring to the case of the Nigerian Yoruba.

[12] Cf. Walker Connor, 'Beyond reason. The nature of the ethnonational bond', in *Ethnicity*, 69–75, at 71: [a nation] 'is the largest group that can command a person's loyalty because of felt kinship ties; it is, from this perspective, the fully extended family.'

[13] Brown, *Contemporary nationalism*, 13.

[14] But see Smith's criticism of its 'topical' use: Smith, *The nation in history*, 57–60.

[15] Smith, *The nation in history*, 52–62; Brown, *Contemporary nationalism*, 20–22.

[16] Smith, *The nation in history*, 57–62 and 25–26, respectively. Anthony D. Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations* (Oxford, 1986), 210–212, where the primordialist view is labelled Parmenidean versus Heraclitan for the instrumentalist view.

as we wish, back to a time when most people did not have much choice in life and did not have the opportunity to see more of the world than the locality where they were born.

However, despite his critical stance, Smith has placed himself in the constructivist camp by overtly advocating an 'ethnosymbolic approach', which 'regards the central components of ethnic and national phenomena as both socio-cultural and symbolic, rather than demographic or political'. It seeks for clues to the nature and role of ethnicity in so-called myth-symbol complexes, a concept developed by John Armstrong. Such complexes must be seen as 'distinctive clusters of myths, symbols, and memories' related to ethnic origins, election, homeland, etc., which are both constitutive in an objective sense because they contribute to structuring an ethnie's or a nation's social relations and cultural institutions, and subjective because they appeal in a highly cogent and pervasive way to individual members' perceptions and beliefs. For this reason, myth-symbol complexes contribute in important ways to an ethnic or national community's dynamic sense of belonging and solidarity.[17]

The discussion about the modernity of nations

If according to this conceptual scheme ethnic groups and nations can coexist, and emphatically do so in the modern world, historians strongly disagree about a similar coexistence in the premodern past. For decades now the dominant discourse is that 'nations' are an invention of the (early) modern age, that they were the side-products of the 'modern' state formation process and of Romanticist ideas on 'people'.[18] Consequently, neither in Antiquity nor in the Middle Ages would nations have existed; these were worlds in which kings and emperors ruled over ethnic groups. Seen from this perspective, ethnic groups and nations correspond to successive stages in (political) history. And if Smith criticises modernists for 'their tendency to separate

[17] Smith, *The nation in history*, 50–52, 62–77; John A. Armstrong, *Nations before nationalism* (Chapel Hill, 1982), 7–9.

[18] Cf. Smith, *The nation in history*, 27–34; and Herfried Münkler, 'Nation als politische Idee im frühneuzeitlichen Europa', in *Nation und Literatur im Europa der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Klaus Garber (Tübingen, 1989), 56–86, at 56–58, for ultra-short summaries of the modernist view.

off the study of nations and nationalism from that of ethnicity',[19] he does so only to present premodern ethnic communities as a preliminary stage to modern nations. But by underlining that the latter, heedful of their ethnic roots, need to sustain an ethnic core 'in order to survive'—or else '"re-invent" one if they lack one'[20] Smith has positioned himself as a moderate modernist. He is a modernist because he does not believe in premodern nations, let alone nationalism, he is moderate because he sees modern nations as clearly rooted in premodern ethnies; therefore, modern nations should be studied in relationship to the premodern ethnies that preceded them.[21]

Even so, one should ask oneself how far nations go back in time. Is there indeed any sense in tracing modern nations back to medieval predecessors—whether called ethnies or (proto)nations? In support, there is the observation that most of the seventy-three 'nationalities' that at present can be counted on the European continent, have kept the ethnic names that were already in use in the Middle Ages and still live in more or less the same areas where ethnic groups of the same name demonstrably lived a millennium or longer ago. This induced the scholars who made this count, the Czech sociologists Jaroslav Krejci and Vitezslav Velimsky, boldly to state that peoples hardly ever 'die'—in fact they knew of only four cases of what they call 'complete ethnic extinction' in European history during the last millennium: the Romance-speaking Dalmatians, the Celtic-speaking Cornish, the Slavonic-speaking Polabians or Elbe Slavs, and the Baltic-speaking Pruz or Prussians.[22]

Krejci and Velimsky further established that the seventy-three European nationalities have experienced quite different histories. Their degree of political incorporation today is quite diverse: twenty-four (about one third) have their own sovereign state, nineteen (about a quarter) hold an equal position with other nationalities in a federated

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[19] Smith, *Antiquity*, 18 and 14, respectively.

[20] Smith, *Ethnic origins*, 212–214.

[21] E.g. Smith, *Ethnic origins*, 15. For a short survey as well as criticism of modernist theories on nations and nationalism: Smith, *Antiquity*, introduction and chapters 1–4, in fact all reprints from articles, published between 1983 and 1996.

[22] Jaroslav Krejčí and Vítězslav Velímský, *Ethnic and political nations in Europe* (London, 1981; reprinted, and adapted to post-1989 conditions, in 1996). By using terms like 'extinction' we should beware of the inadequate analogy of ethnic communities with animal species; cf. *ibidem*, 249. The alternative use of 'ethnocide' (Smith, *Ethnic origins*, 96) is even more suggestive.

state, eighteen (another quarter) have an autonomous status within a state—federated or not—and twelve (about one sixth) do not have any rights of self-government. Most European nationalities (sixty out of seventy-three) see language as the 'primary basis of their particular culture', but only forty-seven are linguistically exclusive, meaning that they do not share their language with other nationalities. In over half of the cases (forty-two out of seventy-three) the ethnic/national consciousness proves to be a mixture of political aspirations and cultural values, for twenty-four it is mainly cultural values that count, for only seven the attachment to their own state comes first.

This seems an impressive medieval heritage indeed. But what's in a name? Does the age-long persistence of an ethnonym in the same area mean that the people indicated by that name are members of one ethnic group or nation that did not change markedly in the course of centuries? That would be extremely unlikely. However, the interesting point here is that the name of a territory—originally derived from an ethnic name or not—can get 'fixed' in time, after which all inhabitants of whatever ethnic background start to name themselves, or are named by others, after this territory, and in addition develop a sense of belonging to a 'culture' that is continuously under construction, and subject to reconstruction and reinvention. In this sense, ethnicity is as much a geographical as a social phenomenon.

Apart from this aside on time-depth and geography, it will be difficult to deny, even for the staunchest perennialist, that the modernists do have a point. After the late Middle Ages some things in society and public government have changed dramatically, which had a tremendous impact on the possibilities of giving shape to the idea of a nation. These changes were in the field of:

a) sophistication of state organisaton, of its 'military and administrative methods of control'.[23] Modern states have clearly defined territories and are far better organised and far more deeply involved in their subjects' lives than their medieval counterparts. The latter was hugely facilitated by:
b) new media (printing press, radio, television) that have altered dramatically the scale and intensity of cultural homogenisation, as well as the possibilities of governments to access the minds of entire populations, to manipulate, indoctrinate and eventually to mobilise the masses.

[23] Smith, *Ethnic origins*, 132.

c) and in addition: the extensions of, and improvements in, physical infrastructure (roads, bridges, etcetera), traffic and means of transport, which have contributed to national unification.
d) linguistic unification as a powerful instrument of national integration only came into its own in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For instance, about 1500, approximately half the population of the British Isles was still 'predominantly Celtic-speaking'.[24]
e) the more general acceptance of popular sovereignty as a central tenet of political philosophy from the eigtheenth century onwards, which allowed for the equalisation of 'people' and 'state'. In late medieval philosophy, ideas on popular sovereignty were not completely absent but they remained marginal.
f) and more in general: ideology. Nothing that comes even close to a comprehensive nationalist ideology, including a new set of social values and a new code of expected behaviour, ever developed among medieval intellectuals.[25]

In sum, the weakest spot in any premodern feeling of national identity seems to be the absence of comprehensiveness, of 'total' social support, pervading all layers of society, which prevented for the time being the full deployment of its 'potential as a mass belief'.[26] Most moderate modernists are convinced that the proto-nations of the later Middle Ages were carried by the elite, and by the elite alone—which is in accordance with Smith's so-called lateral-aristocratic model.[27] It is not easy to counter this objection, unless by retaliating, as Rudolf Jaworski already did, that well into the eighteenth or even nineteenth century identification with the nation was primarily a thing of the aristocracy and the urban elites.[28] But this does not help us much further. Neither does the fact that over the last century a massive amount of terminological work has been done, especially by German historians, to clarify the semantics of key concepts in the development of a national discourse: *natio, populus, patria*. So, now we know fairly well, in what sense these terms are used in text genres from specific periods of time and areas. But too little attention has been paid to the social contexts in which these texts circulated, and how deeply they were, so to speak,

[24] Steven G. Ellis, '"Not mere English". The British perspective, 1400–1650', *History today* 38 (1988), 41–48, at 46.
[25] Cf. R. Jaworski, 'Zur Frage vormoderner Nationalismen in Ostmitteleuropa', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 5 (1979), 398–417, at 410.
[26] Josep R. Llobera, *The god of modernity. The development of nationalism in Western Europe* (Oxford, 1994), 120.
[27] E.g. Smith, *The nation in history*, 71–72.
[28] Jaworski, 'Zur Frage', 415.

consumed and put to use. In addition, it may be worth while to pay closer attention to other text genres or to information that at first sight may seem rather trivial. For example, does the existence of ethnic stereotypes or ethnic jokes prove that some measure of national identification and consciousness has trickled down to the lower layers of society? And what about onomastic data or references to heroes or heroic events in popular songs, prayers, riddles and proverbs, jokes and anecdotes and collective expressions of pride or mourning after such events as battles won or lost, new kings born or kings deceased?[29]

Even so, it would be unwise to just brush the modernists' claims aside and try to envisage a medieval nationalism that is on equal footing with modern nationalism, as was suggested by a number of historians who had no problem with speaking of medieval nationalism, big names such as George Coulton, Johan Huizinga, Gaines Post or Halvdan Koht.[30] On their part, modernists should admit that some kind of national identification existed in the Middle Ages, and it is not difficult to bombard them with the titles of hundreds of publications on exactly this subject.[31] Recently, Adrian Hastings even went so far as to locate the beginnings of the modern nation in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, implying that outside (medieval) Christendom no

[29] A fascinating medieval example of extreme identification of an entire populace with their country (nation?) on the occasion of a singular event is offered by what happened in the county of Flanders during the days immediately following the battle of the Golden Spurs in July 1302. Véronique Lambert, 'De Guldensporenslag van faitdivers tot ankerpunt van de Vlaamse identiteit (1302–1838). De natievormende functionaliteit van historiografische mythen', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 115 (2000), 365–391. For the development and new use of national stereotypes from the twelfth century onwards also Claire Weeda, 'Ethnic stereotyping in twelfth-century Paris', in: Meredith Cohen and Justine Firnhaber-Baker (eds), *Identity and difference in Francia and medieval France* (Aldershot, 2009).

[30] E.g. G.G. Coulton, 'Nationalism in the Middle Ages', *Cambridge historical journal* 5 (1935/1937), 15–40; J.H. Huizinga, 'Patriotism and nationalism in European history', in J.H. Huizinga, *Men and ideas. History, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance*, trans. James S. Holmes and Hans van Marle (London, 1959), 97–155; Halvdan Koht, 'The dawn of nationalism in Europe', *American historical review* 52 (1947), 265–280; Gaines Post, 'Two notes on nationalism in the Middle Ages', *Traditio* 9 (1953), 281–320.

[31] The database Brepolis Medieval Bibliographies (covering the years 1967–2007) has no less than 514 hits when searched on 'national AND identity', and 499 when searched on 'national identity' (Free search/Full text field). Date of search: 18 April 2008.

nation ever developed.[32] As a result of this conceptual confusion the picture of medieval nations and national identities is blurred. Smith himself, when writing about the Middle Ages, is not very consistent in his use of the labels 'nation' versus 'ethnie'. Josep Llobera, another British sociologist with an interest in the (proto)history of nationalism, has added to the confusion by just substituting 'nations' for Smith's 'ethnies' in his highly descriptive rendering of medieval developments.[33]

More than anything else these examples prove that there is little sense in drawing too sharp a line between the 'antiquity' of ethnies and the 'modernity' of nations. Apparently, nations and nationalisms took a long time to develop, and their evolution must be seen as a complex, non-linear process, rather than as a simple, linear succession of stages. At various points in time, but no doubt already starting with the barbarian kingdoms of the early Middle Ages, ethnicity, both as part of social reality and as part of an ideology, was linked to a conception of public government over a territory and a people, leading to attempts at national integration, such as those of the Visigoth kings of Spain after 550 or of Alfred the Great in Anglo-Saxon England at the end of the ninth century. Both examples also demonstrate that this was not a one-way evolutionary track, because in each case success was followed by set-back and retreat. The type of identification with the state that kings like Alfred advocated, vanished, and it was only much later that the process of nation-formation in England was gaining speed again, but then in quite different forms and under very different circumstances. The same can be said about the early modern period, in which, according to Llobera, factors like monarchical absolutism and the 'cosmopolitan pretensions of the Enlightenment' became serious counterweights against any developing nationalism.[34]

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[32] Adrian Hastings, *The construction of nationhood. Ethnicity, religion and nationalism* (Cambridge/New York, 1997); cf. Smith, *The nation in history*, 37–40. According to Steven Grosby, Hastings should at least have added ancient Israel as the cradle of national identity; cf. Smith, *The nation in history*, 44–45.

[33] Llobera, *The god*, ch. 2, especially p. 39. In a later publication, Llobera tends to describe national feelings in medieval Europe as expressions of 'patriotism'. Josep R. Llobera, *Foundations of national identity. From Catalonia to Europe* (New York/Oxford, 2004), 32.

[34] Llobera, *The god*, 115 and 220, proposition 4; 153–154 and proposition 16.

Is national identity a useful concept in studying nations in the past?

'Identity', so declared the political scientist, W.J.M. Mackenzie, in 1978, 'is a word driven out of its wits by overuse'.[35] Mackenzie was ridiculing the inescapability of 'identity' after this concept had started to gain popularity in the social sciences during the 1960s. Its history is much older—it goes back to Aristotle's treatment of 'sameness' in the first book of his Topics.[36] In scholastic texts from the Middle Ages *identitas* is a common enough technical term, which could refer to both sameness and uniqueness in a variety of contexts.[37] For our purpose, an important development in the concept of identity has been its psychological 'transposition' from the realm of the individual to the realm of the collective. Indeed, at a certain point in time such concepts as 'identity' and 'will', that were first only predicated of individuals, then became qualities that could be ascribed to all kinds of social groups as well.[38] According to Smith, the linking of both identity and will to nation was first conceived by the German Romantic movement, which believed in a nation's essential authenticity. National identity, in that particular sense, more or less coincided with 'national character', which became an object of much diligent—as well as dilettante—research from the end of the seventeenth century, to be elevated to a 'guiding principle' of nationalism by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Swiss

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[35] Quoted in Brubaker, *Ethnicity*, 31.

[36] Stéphane Ferret, *L'identité* (Paris, 1998), 45–48. For an English translation of the source text (Topics, book I, chapter 7): J.L. Ackrill, *A new Aristotle reader* (Oxford, 1987), 65–66.

[37] E.g. R.E. Latham and D.R. Howlett, *Dictionary of medieval Latin from British sources. Fasc. V (A-L)* (Oxford, 1997), s.v. 'identitas'. In theology 'identitas' was frequently used in definitions of the Holy Trinity or to clarify the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. For the former, see, for example, Petrus Lombardus' standard text book *Quattuor Libri Sententiarum* (lib. I, distinctio 23, caput 5): 'Quod in Trinitate non est diversitas nec singularitas vel solitudo, sed unitas et trinitas, et distinctio et identitas'. For the latter, see Thomas Aquinas's comment on the fourth book of the Lombard's Sententiae, in a quaestio on the resurrection of the body (distinctio 44, quaestio 1), where it is argued that the 'identity of the whole (body)' (*identitas totius*) was not affected by the loss of 'accidental' parts ('like nails and hair'), but it was when 'essential', or organic, parts were missing. Both texts were taken from the Brepolis *Library of Latin Texts LLT* (Turnhout, 2007-).

[38] We also should distinguish direct from indirect transposition. The former happens when will and identity are ascribed to collectivities, the latter when heroic individuals are supposed to be able to represent, embody, symbolise, exemplify, etc., the ethnie's or the nation's will or identity, or even are being held capable of fulfilling its destiny by single handed action.

philosopher once stated in an aphoristic way: 'Every people has, or must have, a character; if it lacks one, we must begin by endowing it with one'—note that Rousseau uses 'people' instead of nation.[39]

Apart from possible doubts about the absolute character of the Romantic dividing line,[40] it will be clear that identity remains something quite elusive, and this is especially so for group identities.[41] Recently, the Dutch literary historian, Joep Leerssen, has pointed to their highly volatile character, because they can cover 'totally different aggregates [of people] from context to context or from time to time.' First, one has to distinguish between diachronic and synchronic meanings of identity, the former stressing 'permanence and continuity' and 'gravitating towards the analysis of self-images', the latter 'separate and unique individuality', and gravitating towards the comparative analysis of hetero-images and imagined contrasts with others. Secondly, just as, from an individual's perspective, any one may feel 'to be part of [many] differently-constituted groups' at the same time, group identities can be split-up in countless 'atom-units'. However, in the end such units do divide as well as bind, they breed conflict as well as cohesion. For that reason group identity always is 'a balancing process, where the internal cohesion and the external distinctness of the group outweigh the group's internal diversity and its external similarities [i.e. similarities with outsiders]'. The recognition of such balancing processes has evoked diverging reactions, ranging from the formulation of 'identity politics' advocating 'self discovery and self-realisation', to a

[39] Smith, *Antiquity*, 246–247. Cf Joep Leerssen, *Nationaal denken in Europa. Een cultuurhistorische schets* (Amsterdam, 1999), 26–45.

[40] There are cases from the end of the Middle Ages, in which the 'identity' concept was already connected to social collectivities, such as citizens. Cf. Robert von Friedeburg, 'Civic humanism and republican citizenship in early modern Germany', in *Republicanism. A shared European heritage. Vol. I. Republicanism and constitutionalism in early modern Europe*, ed. Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, 2002), 127–145, at 132–134 (after Hofmann), on 'identitas' in the work of the Castilian conciliarist theologian, John of Segovia (d. 1458).

[41] Indeed, in this general, tautological sense, defining a 'nation' would be the same as defining its identity. This is more or less what Smith does in the opening pages of his *National identity* book. See especially page 14, where the 'fundamental features of national identity' virtually coincide with the definition of the nation immediately following. On the subsequent pages (14–15), national identity is circumscribed as 'fundamentally multidimensional', a 'complex construct' (like the nation) 'composed of a number of interrelated components—ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic and legal-political'. This turns national identity into 'a flexible and persistent force in modern life and politics'.

postmodern rejection of identity 'as an ontological category' in favour of the celebration of 'the values of marginality, exception, difference and hybridity'.[42]

In the field of social scientific research, similar doubts about the usefulness of group identity as an analytical category have surfaced. The American sociologist and Bourdieu adherent, Rogers Brubaker, may be the first one who has proposed that we abandon the term identity. According to Brubaker, any use of it in the social sciences (and the same goes for history) is riddled with three sorts of difficulties.[43] First, identity can be both a 'category of practice' (that is, a category linked to everyday social experience) and a 'category of analysis'; both categories can easily be conflated. Secondly, identity is located within a particularly complex semantic field, because several accepted meanings are outright contradictory. Identity refers both to 'a fundamental and consequential *sameness* among members of a group', and to core aspects of individual or collective 'selfhood', i.e. *uniqueness*. Furthermore, these two divergent meanings can be understood both in a more *static* sense and as 'processual, interactive *development*' that leads to collective action. In other words, 'identity' has static as well as dynamic connotations, and both individual/particular/unique and collective/sameness referents. Thirdly, one should distinguish between 'strong' and 'soft' conceptions of identity, the latter being tied-up with 'constructedness, contestedness, contingency, instability, multiplicity, fluidity', the former with 'strong notions of group boundedness and homogeneity' as well as of 'clear boundaries between inside and outside' i.e. of what communities of people share.[44] Of the conceptual alternatives which Brubaker proposes, most useful to our purpose is 'identification', which has the advantage over identity in that it is a 'processual, active term', better suited to express variability and change over time and in space. In addition, one other of Brubaker's sub-distinctions may be valuable, namely between internal self-identification and external identification (e.g. when public authorities actively provide means of 'identification', they contribute to identification from outside).

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[42] Joep Leerssen, 'Identity/alterity/hybridity', in *Imagology. The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey*, ed. Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (Amsterdam/New York, 2007), 335–342, at 337–340.

[43] Brubaker, *Ethnicity*, ch. 2.

[44] Brubaker, *Ethnicity*, 46; italics PH. This distinction reminds us of the division between the 'primordial' versus 'instrumental' approach of ethnic groups and nations, which I discussed above.

On the basis of Leerssen's and Brubaker's distinctions, four different 'perception perspectives' can be defined, to be used for analyzing ethnic and national identities even in a more distant past:

a) the perception ethnies/nations have of themselves (the We/Us or identity perspective; which invariably includes historical reflection, a view of the group's own past); this is a contemporary-internal view, aimed at the group's cohesion.
b) the perception ethnies/nations have of other ethnic groups (the We/Them or alterity perspective); this is an internal view aimed at the group's distinctiveness vis-à-vis other groups.
c) the perception others have of them, either contemporaneously (the They/Us or expectation perspective; an external view aimed at distinction by others) or
d) the perception of the 'Us' in the past by later, non-contemporary historians, either by outsiders or insiders, either by later/modern or by contemporary historians (the history perspective).

Perspective	Direction of relation	Types of identification		
Identity	We—Us	Internal	cohesion	diachronic + synchronic
Alterity	We—Them	Internal	distinction	synchronic
Expectation	They—Us	External	distinction	synchronic
History	They/later We —Us	Internal/ External	cohesion/ distinction/ neutral	diachronic

On closer consideration, the diagram hides even more complications than may be apparent at first sight. To start with, the four perspectives can be seen as multi-layered. For instance, according to the Dutch historian, Willem Frijhoff, the identity perspective covers, first, an imagological layer (how does an ethnic group or nation 'imagine' what it thinks it is in an interplay with social praxis?), next, a narratological one (how are these images translated into an ethnic or national discourse?), and finally, as coating, so to speak, the internalisation (internal appropriation and acceptance) of that discourse.[45] Furthermore,

[45] Willem Frijhoff, 'Identiteit en identiteitsbesef. De historicus en de spanning tussen verbeelding, benoeming en herkenning', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 107 (1992), 614–634, at 614–615.

interesting feed-back mechanisms are at work within the situations covered by our four perspectives. For instance, the 'expectation' of the expectation perspective refers to two well-known phenomena. One follows from external identification 'caused' by public authorities (e.g. one gets a passport which says one is 'Dutch', after which one is officially regarded and treated as Dutch abroad). The other follows from cultural expectations and is sometimes referred to as 'auto-exoticism'; it happens when people act-out a culture that is ascribed to them by foreigners—for example, when peasants from Tyrol behave in a supposedly traditional Tyrolian manner, or fishermen from the Zuiderzee villages of Marken and Volendam act in a typically Zuiderzee fishing village manner, because tourists expect them to do so.[46] In fact, this means that 'identity and alterity are no longer seen as polar opposites, but as ingredients capable of interpenetrating and mingling.'[47] The history perspective is extremely complicated because it can cover or hide every other type of identification just distinguished. But evidently it matters for our view of, say, the medieval Frisians, whether we depend on contemporary or on modern historical research (even if the latter has used the former as an important primary source), or whether the contemporary or modern historian is, was, or considers himself to be Frisian.

National identity in medieval history

The extent to which these four perspectives are accessible to medieval historians depends on the availability of sources. Out of necessity, medievalists often make the choice either to concentrate on the 'cultural stuff' that made up the core of ethnic or national identities (i.e. the identity perspective) or rather on those boundary situations that make differences between ethnic groups or nations more explicit (i.e. the alterity and/or expectation perspectives). Of course, these

[46] On Tyrol: Regina Bendix, 'After identity. Post-ethnicity in Europe and America', in *Managing ethnicity. Perspectives from folklore studies, history and anthropology*, ed. Regina Bendix and Herman Roodenburg (Amsterdam, 2000), 77–95, at 83–85. On Marken and Volendam: Rob van Ginkel, 'Hollandse tonelen. Een etnologische verkenning', in *Geschiedenis van Holland. Deel IIIb. 1795 tot 2000*, ed. Thimo de Nijs and Eelco Beukers (Hilversum, 2003), 621–694, at 624–636 and 663–678. On the concept of 'auto-exoticism': Leerssen, 'Identity/alterity/hybridity', 341.

[47] Leerssen, 'Identity/alterity/hybridity', 341.

approaches are not absolutely mutually exclusive, but still they presuppose different research strategies, resulting in such different end-products as Colette Beaune's *Naissance de la Nation France* versus Robert Bartlett's *Making of Europe*.

If both approaches are legitimate, each has its own problems. With respect to the first approach, research is often focussed on such accessible and generally accepted, 'fixed' cultural/national identity markers as language and religion. At first sight, religion would be the least suitable of the two—because was not every medieval man a good Roman Christian? This is true, and one could add that for a long time *Cristianitas* (Christendom) was the major universalist counterforce against national integration. It was one world stretching 'dal Peiron tro sus en Alamaigna', from near Santiago de Compostela to the ends of Germany, as a Provencal troubadour stated in the twelfth century.[48] Within this Christian world, Alexander von Roes, a canon from Cologne living in the second half of the thirteenth century, distinguished just three nations—the Italian, the German and the French—because they had divided between them the three universal values that counted on earth: *sacerdotium*, the pope, *imperium*, the emperor, and *studium,* learning.[49] But this was paying lip service to old symbols, because in other works Alexander proved himself to be a German nationalist of sorts, who fervently defended his *patria* and his *materna lingua* against French arrogance. By that time the Roman Church itself fully recognised the existence of nations, and some of these nations had started to encroach upon the Church's domain. First, by intruding upon its monopoly of holiness: kings became saints; kingdoms and empires, and later even territorial principalities, became sacred and holy.[50] Secondly, by harming the privileges of the clergy, and finally, by interfering in the appointment of prelates and the collection of papal revenues. In that way, by the end of the Middle Ages, there was a clear tendency towards the constitution of national churches, which in due time would become important instruments of royal power. So, in a sense, just as the repeated extension of the European Community has

[48] Elisabeth Schulze-Busacker, 'French conceptions of foreigners and foreign languages in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', *Romance philology* 41 (1987), 24–47, at 27.

[49] Münkler, 'Nation als politische Idee', 63.

[50] For the duchy of Brabant, see Jaap Tigelaar, *Brabants historie ontvouwd. 'Die alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant' en het Brabantse geschiedbeeld anno 1500* (Hilversum, 2006), 72–77.

reinforced rather than weakened national identification, so did the expansion of the universal Roman Church and papal power contribute to the strenghtening of national integration—although I am not sure, whether this was also the case in such principalities as Brabant, Holland and Guelders, which did not even have their own bishop.

Also much debated is the contribution of national languages. Typical in this respect is Derek Pearsall's discussion of late medieval Englishness in response to the appearance of Thorlac Turville-Petre's book on the increasing use of English in literature around 1300.[51] What for Turville-Petre was a sure expression of national identity, Pearsall saw only as 'evidence of fragmentary, sporadic, regional responses to particular circumstances, not a wave of English nationalism sweeping the country'.[52] More generally, Pearsall subscribed to V.H. Galbraith's 'warning against the dangers of associating nationalism with language at this period of the Middle Ages'.[53] To Pearsall, a better signpost of an emerging English national identity would be Henry V's politically inspired promotion of the English language and his intention to mobilise English poetry in support of a 'rhetoric of nationhood' in the beginning of the fifteenth century, when such authors as Thomas Hoccleve gave poetical expression to the king's strong feeling that the nation's one language—English—was 'to some extent an embodiment of its identity'. But then again, Lancastrian political ambitions, that were shaped by Henry V's acceptance of the French crown and his marriage to Catherine de France, made his English language project too ambiguous, and after the dual monarchy had fallen to pieces in 1429, there would be 'little encouragement for any expression of English nationhood' for a long time to come.

In France, the debate concentrates of old on the triumph of the *langue d'oïl*, which took shape during the government of King Philip August. According to a Canadian Romanist, the battle of Bouvines was as much a linguistic milestone as a national historical one. From that moment on, France's enhanced position in the world made French not just the language of the French king, the royal administration and

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[51] Derek Pearsall, 'The idea of Englishness in the fifteenth century', in *Nation, court and culture. New essays on fifteenth-century English poetry*, ed. Helen Cooney (Dublin, 2001), 15–27; Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the nation. Language, literature, and national identity, 1290–1340* (Oxford, 1996).

[52] Pearsall, 'The idea', 17.

[53] Pearsall, 'The idea', 18.

every decent piece of literature produced in the kingdom, but also into the language of international commercial exchange. The same process went along with an increasing contempt for other languages: foreign or regional accents were mocked—especially Anglo-Norman French and Flemish—and messed-up to create the impression that languages other than French were just one muddle of unintelligible, barbarian jabber.[54] Of course, this does not mean that every single subject of the king of France from that moment on spoke some sort of standardised French—linguistic unification has not been accomplished in France even today—but it does suggest that already in the late Middle Ages the French language did contribute to the formation of a French national identity.

In much other recent research on medieval ethnicity a different focus is chosen, inspired by the ground-breaking work of the Norwegian anthropologist, Fredrick Barth. Barth was the first to give centre-stage to 'boundary-connected cultural features' in anthropological research and such features most prominently surface in all kinds of inter-ethnic or international interaction.[55] In other words, as the German archaeologist Stephan Brather has put it, boundaries invite or force ethnic groups to 'a selection of distinguishing cultural features, because ethnic groups share most social, economic and cultural characteristics with their neighbours.'[56] Such 'distinguishing cultural features' which sharpen and at the same time 'instrumentalise' ethnic self-consciousness and distinction need not be peaceful because they force the participants to acts of inclusion, like acculturation and assimiliation, or exclusion, like discrimination and segregation, towards foreigners or ethnic minorities. At the same time 'boundary circumstances' enable ethnic or national feelings to override social inequalities—it becomes more important for two persons to be, say, Brabanters irrespective of whether they are master and servant. This is certainly so, when 'images of past suffering and injustice are invoked', or of past or incipient glory, I would add.[57]

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[54] Schulze-Busacker, 'French conceptions', 39–40.

[55] Fredrik Barth, 'Preface 1998', in *Ethnic groups and boundaries. The social organization of culture difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (repr. Long Grove IL, 1998), 5–7, at 6.

[56] Sebastian Brather, 'Ethnic identities as constructions of archaeology. The case of the Alamanni', in *On barbarian identity*, 149–175, at 171–173.

[57] Eriksen, *Ethnicity*, 159–160.

For that reason, boundary situations par excellence are 'international' wars, certainly when they involve invasion and/or conquest, and large-scale migration/colonisation. Medieval history offers many fine examples of both types—not always easy to distinguish—which continuously stretched the edges of Latin Christendom. The ethnic part of the story is still far from complete[58] and recent research has brought unexpected new insights, for instance into the persistence of a Lombard 'national' identity after the Norman conquest of southern Italy, into an incipient Christian nationalism in the crusader kingdoms of the Middle East or into the multi-ethnic, rather than uniquely Norwegian, character of the colonisation of Iceland.[59] Of a more fleeting nature but no less massive in terms of numbers of people involved were travels and overseas voyages, leading to intensive intercultural contacts, especially pilgrimages. Other 'boundary events' with the same effect were meetings between people of different nations at princely courts, studia and universities, ecumenical Church councils, and in the houses of monastic orders operating all over Europe. However, undoubtedly, the most common of these were inter-ethnic marriages in frontier areas which must have confused any tendency to national identification.

Epilogue: national identities and the late medieval Low Countries?

In view of the toilsome establishment of the Burgundian-Habsburg state complex in the Low Countries—a process taking almost 160 years[60] and which was often enough accompanied by violent resistance—it would have been extremely unlikely for a supra-regional, 'Netherlandish', identity, to have developed anywhere before the end

[58] E.g. Robert Bartlett, *The making of Europe. Conquest, colonization and cultural change 950–1350* (London, 1993), esp. ch. 8 and 9.

[59] J.H. Drell, 'Cultural syncretism and ethnic identity. The Norman "conquest" of southern Italy and Sicily', *Journal of medieval history* 25 (1999), 187–202; Verena Epp, 'Die Entstehung eines "Nationalbewusstseins" in den Kreuzfahrerstaaten', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 45 (1989), 596–604; Przemyslaw Urbanczyk, 'Ethnic aspects of the settlement of Iceland', *Collegium medievale. Interdisciplinary journal of medieval research* 15 (2002), 155–165.

[60] In a sense it was never really 'completed', because the prince-bishopric of Liège always managed to stay out.

of the fifteenth century.[61] And even at that point the principalities and autonomous regions (Friesland!) of the Low Countries were separated by large demographic, economic, linguistic and cultural differences, that were almost impossible to bridge. Logically, any history of the evolution of national identity in the late medieval Low Countries must start from this, regional, level, and is by definition a history of national identities—in the plural. The work done so far followed in the wake of the renewed historical interest in national identity and nationalism that emerged in The Netherlands in the early 1990s, leading to fine theoretical contributions by such eminent historians as H.W. von der Dunk, W. Frijhoff, E.H. Kossmann and H.C.C. de Schepper.[62] As so often happens, historians, in this case, were several years ahead of the general public, whose interest in the question of national identity got a boost only after 9/11 and the meteoric rise of Pim Fortuyn on the Dutch political scene.

When Robert Stein introduced the research project of which this volume is an outcome, he indicated the myth-symbol complexes surrounding the known threesome, prince, land (territory), and people (subjects), as the main research target.[63] He tested the possibilities and limitations on the basis of his unrivalled knowledge of the duchy of Brabant to conclude that, from the thirteenth century onwards, everywhere in the Low Countries 'articulated feelings of solidarity' came to the fore by means of 'all kinds of cultural expressions…that were aimed at the glorification of prince, land and people'.[64] And although

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[61] For a thorough treatment of this question, see Alastair Duke, 'The elusive Netherlands. The question of national identity in the early modern Low Countries on the eve of the Revolt', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 119 (2004), 10–38.

[62] H.W. von der Dunk, 'Het vraagstuk van de Nederlandse identiteit', in *Geschiedenis zonder verleden? Over Nederlandse identiteit en geschiedschrijving*, ed. K. Fens *et al.* (s.l., 1990), 9–20; Frijhoff, 'Identiteit en identiteitsbesef'; E.H. Kossmann, *Een tuchteloos probleem. De natie in de Nederlanden* (Leuven, 1994); H.C.C. de Schepper, 'Nationale identiteit en geschiedvervalsing betreffende de Oude Nederlanden', in *Sporen en spiegels. Beschouwingen over geschiedenis en identiteit*, ed. J.C. Dekker (Tilburg, 1995), 31–59. See also, for instance, the special issue of the journal *Beleid & maatschappij* (1995–2), dedicated to nationalism in The Netherlands and Belgium, edited by W.P. Blockmans.

[63] Robert Stein, 'Nationale identiteiten in de late Middeleeuwen. Een verkenning', *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 28 (2002), 222–246; cf. Véronique Lambert, 'Methodologische beschouwingen bij het onderzoek naar de concepten "natie", "nationalisme" en "nationale identiteit" in de Middeleeuwen', *Jaarboek voor middeleeuwse geschiedenis* 4 (2001), 66–85.

[64] Stein, 'Nationale identiteiten', 237.

Stein realised that most of the historical sources behind this construction of positive 'national' images were produced by members of the social elite, historiographers and humanists, he pointed to a number of ways to get around this impediment, such as the study of public ceremonies. These could include processions or parades held in major towns on the occasion of the ceremonial entry of new princes, or all kinds of literary expressions of popular culture, be it in stage plays, songs and suchlike, or of (historical) descriptions of popular revolts.[65]

To what extent Robert Stein's moderate optimism was justified, is evident from this volume, and from earlier work produced by his team. To mention just two examples, Stein himself, in a well-crafted article, further unravelled the symbolic meaning of the mysterious number seventeen that was used to describe, and connect, the lands that 'belonged' to the Netherlands (Low Countries) by the end of the Middle Ages.[66] Equally fascinating is Aart Noordzij's discussion of the expression of national identity, or the lack of it, in the duchy of Guelders by contemporary historians with various backgrounds and working from various angles.[67] Noordzij concluded that in Guelders something like a national consciousness took shape from the bottom-up rather than top-down. One of the most nationalist historians was William of Berchen, a citizen of Nijmegen and a priest, who about 1465 wrote a chronicle of Guelders, that was quite critical of the dukes from the House of Egmond—to whom William himself seems to have been connected. Nevertheless they symbolised the sovereignty and unity of the land Guelders, which for William was first and foremost

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[65] For the Humanist contribution to the development of a neoclassical protonational discourse, e.g. Ari Wesseling, 'Are the Dutch civilized? Erasmus on the Batavians and his national identity', *Erasmus of Rotterdam society yearbook* 13 (1993), 68–101; Karin Tilmans, 'Aeneas, Bato and Civilis, the forefathers of the Dutch. The origin of the Batavian tradition in Dutch humanistic historiography', in *Renaissance culture in context. Theory and practice*, ed. Jean R. Brink and William F. Gentrup (Aldershot/Brookfield, 1993), 121–135; Karin Tilmans, 'De ontwikkeling van een vaderland-begrip in de laat-middeleeuwse en vroeg-moderne geschiedschrijving van de Nederlanden', in *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*, ed. N.C.F. van Sas (Amsterdam, 1999), 7–53.

[66] Robert Stein, 'Seventeen. The multiplicity of a unity in the Low Countries', in *The ideology of Burgundy. The promotion of national consciousness, 1364–1565*, ed. D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton and Jan R. Veenstra (Leiden/Boston, 2006), 223–285.

[67] Aart Noordzij, 'Geschiedschrijving en nationale identiteit. Gelre in de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw', *Bijdragen en mededelingen Gelre* 95 (2004), 6–48. I read the manuscript of Dr. Noordzij's Ph.D. dissertation, entitled *Gelre. Dynastie, land en identiteit in de late Middeleeuwen*, only after I had finished my manuscript.

an extension of his hometown and the legal district of which Nijmegen was the capital. The latter reminds us of one of the intriguing questions of national identification that should definitely remain an object of further research: this 'commuting' of national feelings between the local, the (truly) national, and eventually the supra-national levels. For instance, how did a civil servant of the Burgundian central administration, who originated from Leiden, square his identification with the nation Holland with his loyalties towards both his hometown and the supranational interests of the lord he served?[68] Much preliminary work, in particular in terms of prosopography and network analysis, has already been done. Now, the time has come to build on this groundwork, preferably by using as a tool the widely accepted sociological and anthropological conceptual idiom that has just been outlined.

[68] I am thinking of such cases as the Van Boschhuijsen family from Leiden in the fifteenth century. Cf. Hanno Brand, 'Floris en Jan van Boschhuijsen. Leidse edelen aan het Beierse en Bourgondische hof', *Leidschrift* 15 (2000), 64–99.

CHAPTER TWO

AN URBAN NETWORK IN THE MEDIEVAL LOW COUNTRIES. A CULTURAL APPROACH

Robert Stein

Introduction

In the year 1089–1090 the duchy of Lower Lotharingia—an area roughly equivalent to today's Low Countries—was struck with a terrible epidemic. Many people died, their arms and legs, hands and feet coloured black; others survived but their limbs died off and had to be amputated. Nowadays, we believe that the victims were suffering from a disease called ergotism, that was caused by the *claviceps purpurea* species, a parasite that had affected the rye that was a staple in their diet.[1] In the twelfth century however, it was believed that the wrath of God had caused the sick to be afflicted by the *mal des ardents*, later called St Anthony's fire, for the cure of which the intervention of the Virgin was indispensable. The memory of this tragedy must have haunted people for generations. Centuries later many still travelled from far and wide to commemorate the events and to honour the redemptive Lady. The commemoration of the eleventh-century epidemic of ergotism is one of the earliest indications for the existence of a cultural network that developed in the southern Low Countries and (present-day) Northern France during the high Middle Ages, and that would later extend further to the north. For centuries, townsmen from many places gathered annually to commemorate the terrible plague. But in fact this is merely one example. Frequent interchange developed between the most important towns over a long period.[2]

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[1] Virginie Coumans, 'Notes sur l'ergotisme en Brabant au Moyen Âge, particulièrement à Oplinter', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 80 (2002), 1125–1141, at 1125–1131.

[2] Alan E. Knight, 'Drama and society in late medieval Flanders and Picardy', *The Chaucer review* 14 (1980), 379-389, at 380–381.

A shared culture is often seen as one of the key elements of a collective identity. The religious historian and medievalist Adrian Hastings, for instance, describes a nation as: 'a large human community, at once cultural and political'. In this volume, Peter Hoppenbrouwers adds that it is only the extent of politicisation that distinguishes ethnies ('more cultural entities') from nations ('more political entities').[3] When researching nations and national identities, most scholars take political boundaries, real or mythical, as their point of departure, and subsequently try to reconstruct the shared cultural identity within this area. That is also what Wim Blockmans and I did when we started a research-project entitled 'Centralisation or particularism? The development of national identities in the Netherlands'. We wanted to compare identities in the principalities of Brabant and Guelders with emerging identities of the Low Countries as a whole.[4] This approach is certainly valid, as we can see in the chapters by Noordzij, Smithuis and Bijker in this volume. A sense of Low Countries as identity can be seen to operate especially from c. 1570 onwards, when William of Orange and others started their media offensives.[5] Still, we should ask ourselves if this emphasis on the political entities is inevitable. Can a collective identity only develop inside existing political boundaries? Is it homogeneous by definition?

By taking a cultural network as a point of departure, this chapter explores another possible approach, concentrating on a series of inter-urban meetings—military contests, religious and urban festivals—I will try to establish if and to what extent the towns of the Low Countries fostered a shared culture. Which towns were involved? How far did this network spread, how did it evolve during the late Middle Ages and what was its character? We will establish its density and spread, and

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[3] For a discussion of the different approaches of culture, see for instance: David Inglis and John Hughson, *Confronting culture. Sociological vistas* (Oxford, 2003), 5–6. See also Hoppenbrouwers' contribution in the present volume.

[4] The basic assumptions are applied in: Robert Stein, 'Nationale identiteiten in de late Middeleeuwen. Een verkenning', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 28 (2002), 222–246. Compare for the duchy of Guelders, Aart Noordzij, 'Geschiedschrijving en nationale identiteit. Gelre in de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw', *Bijdragen en mededelingen Gelre* 95 (2004), 6–48; Aart Noordzij, *Gelre. Dynastie, land en identiteit in de late Middeleeuwen* (Hilversum, 2009). See also the contributions of Sjoerd Bijker, Aart Noordzij and Justine Smithuis in the present volume.

[5] See the contributions by Alastair Duke and Judith Pollmann in the present volume.

subsequently compare this with political, clerical and other boundaries that often had a more formal and linear character.

State of research

It has often been emphasised that the territory of the medieval and early modern Low Countries was multifaceted, a mosaic as it were. Let us take the so called Seventeen Provinces around 1550 as a point of departure. At first glance, these seem to share virtually no common features at all. As the symbolic reference to seventeen principalities shows, the territory formed a myriad of duchies, counties, prince-bishoprics, margraviates, lordships and semi-autonomous towns, with only shallow institutional links. With the obvious exception of the north and west, there were no natural frontiers, even though the marshes in the northwest of present-day Germany may have functioned in this way. Because the river Scheldt formed the frontier between the German Empire and France, the territory belonged to two different Kingdoms. It was criss-crossed by clerical boundaries, and the jurisdictions of bishoprics, archbishoprics, and monastic orders, with none of them, except the diocese of Utrecht in the northwest, coinciding with political boundaries. The population is unevenly spread over the territory; the west is one of the most densely populated areas of Europe, where nearly half of the population lives in the towns; the east, to the contrary, is almost completely agrarian. Not only is the population unevenly spread, it is also of a different linguistic and ethnic character. The Roman-German linguistic frontier divides the territory in two unequal parts. The ethnic roots of the inhabitants of the Low Countries also diverge, the people in the north boasting their Frisian origin and those in the south pointing to their Frankish ancestry.[6]

When addressing the issue of the unification of the Low Countries, various scholars in the first half of the twentieth century tried to explore in what sense, if any, the Low Countries shared a culture. The famous Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga (1872–1945), concluded that the Seventeen Provinces had virtually nothing in common. There was

[6] Compare: Alastair Duke, 'The elusive Netherlands. The question of national identity in the early modern Low Countries on the eve of the Revolt', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 119 (2004), 10–38, at 10–11.

no common name; there was no common language, and no shared symbols, in fact virtually no shared culture at all. Instead, Huizinga concluded, the unification was essentially a dynastic event:

> National coherence would never have been brought about by geographical, ethnographical, economic and cultural factors alone, even though working all together. It was achieved by the enterprising policy of a high-minded dynasty.[7]

Huizinga pointed to the contrast between the 'French' culture, fostered and diffused by the Burgundian dukes and their noble and administrative elites, and the predominantly 'Netherlandish' culture of the inhabitants of the Low Countries. Nowadays, his view of the unification of the Low Countries, as a primarily political process, is shared by most historians.

A somewhat different interpretation was developed around the turn of the twentieth century by Henri Pirenne (1862–1935). Pirenne earned his fame especially by his thesis on the development of trade in the early Middle Ages. Though less well-known abroad, his *Histoire de la Belgique* is an important work, that was inspired by his vision of the Belgian nation of his own time. The publication of this *magnum opus*—originally in seven volumes—took more than three decades, and was accompanied by smaller, more programmatic, publications. Pirenne argued that the Low Countries were a joining together of two peoples, of Germanic and French origin. The unification of these two peoples was first of all due to the force of economic circumstances and secondly to the tireless political and centralistic ambitions of the House of Burgundy:

> La différence des races ne pouvait constituer un obstacle à l'unité dans des pays où Flamands et Wallons vivaient côte à côte dans les mêmes cadres politiques et religieux, soumis aux mêmes influences civilisatrices, entraînés dans la même activité économique, participant au même droit et possédant des institutions analogues.[8]

The approach that most explicitly departed from the territorial framework, and addressed the cultural sphere instead, is that of the so called *Groot-Nederlandse gedachte* (the Greater Netherlandish Idea), which was promoted most explicitly during the interwar period by

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[7] Johan Huizinga, 'How Holland became a nation', in Johan Huizinga, *Verzamelde werken*, ed. L. Brummel *et al.*, 9 vols. (Haarlem, 1948–1953), II, 266–283, at 271.

[8] Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1948), I, 158.

the Dutch historian Pieter Geyl (1887–1966). According to Geyl, the division of the Low Countries into a northern (Dutch) and southern (Flemish) part was a regrettable aberration from their historical destiny. He wanted to investigate the history of the Netherlandish 'stock' (*Nederlandsche stam*), which was primarily characterised by the fact that its members spoke the Dutch language. The linguistic division was brought about by the incursions of the Salian Franks into the Roman territory in the fourth century. Over time, the territories inhabited by people of Saxon and Frisian origin were conquered and their languages assimilated into a Salic tongue, which eventually developed into the Dutch language. Geyl saw the development of a linguistic continuum as 'a historical force of the first order', that had lead to what today we would call a 'failed nation'.[9] His point of view has been dismissed as 'a fairy tale, a romantic fabrication',[10] but in recent years the importance of the existence of a common language (Dutch) has again been emphasised by scholars like Ludo Beheydt and H.W. von der Dunk. To quote the latter:

> Language is the main locus of the awareness that one belongs to a group, 'a people', that can be distinguished from other such groups. Language is the product of history and of shared experiences and perceptions. The sediment of the special adventures of many generations is located in the peculiarities of the Dutch language and it is the mother-tongue that makes the world recognizable to every man.[11]

While I do not agree with this linguistic approach—I will return to the issue below—it is refreshing to encounter a point of view in which political frontiers do not automatically dominate. In a theoretical sense, it approximates the concept of 'culture areas', as used by cultural anthropologists. By this they understand a contiguous geographic area that is characterised by a certain cultural homogeneity, for instance the Inuit culture in the north-polar regions. This concept has often been declared outdated, because it became obvious that culture is liable to processes of adaptation, acculturation, and especially

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[9] Pieter Geyl, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse stam*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam/Antwerpen, 1948), I, 8 and passim.

[10] L.J. Rogier, 'De evolutie van Hollands visie op Vlaanderen', *Dietsche warande en belfort* 113 (1968), 736–755, at 738.

[11] H.W. von der Dunk, 'Het vraagstuk van de Nederlandse identiteit', in *Cultureel alfa-bètisme in Nederland*, ed. H.C. Cassee and D.J. van de Kaa (Amsterdam, 1989), 59–79, at 60; Ludo Beheydt, *Eén en toch apart. Kunst en cultuur van de Nederlanden* (Leuven, 2002), 48.

lacks a broad general homogeneity. The reconstruction of a definite and stable, demarcated cultural area is therefore impossible.[12] However, the process of transcultural diffusion itself, the spread of cultural objects and values in a globalising world, has recently led to a revaluation of the concept of culture area: in order to reconstruct the spread of people, objects, images and ideas between localities it has proven useful to define a 'culture' and to investigate its dispersion.[13] It remains to be seen, of course, whether the concept of culture area is useful for the situation in the Low Countries. To do so, we will turn to the urban network that developed from the twelfth century onwards in the southern Low Countries and northern France.

Interurban exchange

In 1093, when the investiture conflict was dividing Christianity and while many people in the Low Countries were still suffering from the consequences of the terrible outbreak of ergotism, the ancient bishopric of Arras was re-established to function as a bridgehead of papal reform. According to legend, it was in those days that the following events happened. Two jugglers, one originating from Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, a small town in Normandy, and one from Brussels, had been mortal enemies for many years. Suddenly the Blessed Virgin appeared to them and summoned them to come to the town of Arras, and to reconcile with one another before Lambert, the newly appointed bishop. If they would do so, she promised to return and to give them a candle made of wax that would cure ergotism. After the reconciliation of

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[12] The concept of "culture area" is closely linked to the German *Kulturraum*, abused by the Nazis to legitimise their *Ostpolitik*. Compare: Hans-Joachim Schmidt, *Kirche, Staat, Nation. Raumgliederung der Kirche im mittelalterlichen Europa*, Forschungen zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte 37 (Weimar, 1999), 17.

[13] Definition based on: Charlotte Seymour-Smith, *Macmillan dictionary of anthropology* (London, 1986), 67; compare: *Encyclopaedia Britanncia online*, s.v.; Ira Bashkow, 'A neo-Boasian conception of cultural boundaries', *American anthropologist* 106 (2004), 443–458, at 445; Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 'Culture, power, place. Ethnography at the end of an era', in *Culture, power, place. Explorations in critical anthropology*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Durham/London, 1997), 1–29. Of course, it is inevitable to address certain specific elements of the culture, for it is impossible to investigate all elements that can be brought into relation with such a broad, vague and ill-defined concept as 'culture'. Compare: Tim Ingold, 'Introduction to culture', in *Companion encyclopedia of anthropology*, ed. Tim Ingold (London/New York, 1994), 329–349.

both jugglers, the Virgin, of course, fulfilled her promise And indeed, when dissolved in water, the wax of the candle proved to be an efficacious remedy against ergotism. In commemoration of the remarkable events, the bishop and both jugglers established a fraternity dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.[14]

One century later, between 1175 and 1200, an account of these events was written in Latin, soon to be complemented with a translation into vernacular French. It served multiple purposes, first of all to confirm the usefulness and legitimacy of the bishopric of Arras, the first bishop of which apparently played such an important role in the reconciliation. Secondly, the touching example of fraternity in a violent world must have been attractive to most inhabitants of Arras. Finally, and more importantly, the account served as the foundation-myth for the *Confrèrie Notre-Dame des Ardents*, which appears in the sources from the early thirteenth century onwards. This *Confrèrie* formed a cooperation of local minstrels and burghers and probably replaced an older merchant guild. The miraculous candle became a powerful relic and symbol, and soon the legend was exploited further. In 1249 a hospital was founded to provide accommodation for the sufferers of ergotism, who came to Arras from other towns. To a certain extent, the importance of the fraternity and its myth can be deduced from another use of the tradition: small drops of the candle's wax were dispersed among other parishes in order to be incorporated into new candles. The home towns of the two jugglers, Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise and Brussels, and Lille as bishop Lambert's native town, were among the first recipients. Later, drops of wax were passed on, some to major towns, but sometimes also to smaller parishes in the vicinity of Arras, in order to be melted into new candles. By the middle of the fourteenth century at least fourteen of them possessed one of these precious candles. They constituted a network, a broad belt, reaching from the coast of the Picardy-region in the west to Brussels, in Brabant in the east, and from Arras in the south to Bruges in the north.[15]

The existence of a network of religious exchange between the towns of the southern Low Countries and northern France is confirmed by the procession of the cathedral city of Tournai, some fifty kilometres

[14] Catherine Vincent, 'Fraternité rêvée et lien social fortifié. La confrérie Notre-Dame des Ardents à Arras (début du XIII^{e} siècle–XV^{e} siècle)', *Revue du Nord* 82 (2000), 659–679.

[15] Vincent, 'Fraternité rêvée et lien social', 678–679.

to the southwest of Arras. According to legend, the outbreak of ergotism in 1089–1090 led to the establishment of an annual procession in honour of the Virgin, on the feast of *Exaltatio crucis*, September 14. Our oldest more or less reliable source is the *Liber de restauratione monasterii Sancti Martini Tornacensis,* written 1142–1147, by the Tournai canon Herimannus (c. 1090–1147). This suggests that the procession was hugely popular among the people living in the neighbouring towns and villages, as it was visited by a multitude of approximately 60,000 persons from the adjacent regions. Of course, we should not take the figure too seriously, but the tenor is clear.[16]

The procession still existed in the fourteenth century, and for that period our information about it is far more extensive. At that time it was divided into three successive parts. The festivities started at midnight, when a Byzantine cross was carried around the city of Tournai by a priest, who was followed by a large group of pilgrims. At four in the morning a second procession started, when the shrine of the Virgin was carried by a large deputation of the town of Ghent. Finally, after mass, the third and last circumambulation took place, starting from the church of St Martin. The role of the Ghent deputation during the festivities is remarkable: from 1321 onwards, the Tournai procession was one of the most important public events on Ghent's calendar. No less than two-thirds of the urban budget for religious festivities was earmarked for this single event. It has been assumed that Ghent's commitment was due to the important role of Tournai as a transit port for indispensable foodstuffs, especially grain from the Picardy region.[17]

Still, there was more to the procession than the promotion of Ghent. Many other towns in the Low Countries were involved as well. This is shown by the remarkable account drawn up by Gilles le Muisis (1272–post 1353), prior of the chapter church of St Martin in Tournai. In his famous *Chronicon*, Gilles tells us of the outbreak of the Black Death in 1349 and of the subsequent events. Up to one-third of the population died, and to the survivors it seemed clear that the end of time was drawing near. Many of them threw themselves into an

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[16] *Herimanni liber de restauratione monasterii Sancti Martini Tornacensis*, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SS* XIV (Hanover, 1883), 274–317, at 291.

[17] Marc Boone and Élodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, 'Grains de blé, grains du chapelet. Économie et dévotion entre Gand et Tournai à la fin du Moyen Âge', in *Campin in context. Peinture et société dans la vallée de l'Escaut à l'époque de Robert Campin 1375–1445*, ed. Xavier Fontaine and Jacques Debergh (Valenciennes, 2007), 194–204.

assertive form of public penance and joined the large groups of flagellants who travelled through the land for 33.5 days—a reference to the number of years that Christ had been on earth—, whipping themselves publicly in the towns they passed and singing a lengthy hymn at public places.[18] For some of these groups the horrific events probably stirred the recollection of the epidemic of ergotism more than two and a half centuries before. They sought help from the Holy Virgin of Tournai, or expected her mediation in the warding off of the terrible disaster. They started flowing into the town of Tournai on 15 August 1349, but by mid-September things got more hectic. During these months groups arrived from Bruges (300 flagellants), from Ghent (450), Sluis (300), Dordrecht (400) and later from Liège, Damme, Enghien, Namur, Tienen, Leuven, Nieuwpoort, Eeclo, Mons, Valenciennes etc., in the end amounting to more than 5000 people. Other sources suggest that flagellants from Saint-Omer, Therouanne, Douai and Arras also participated. On September 7, the inhabitants of Tournai were so impressed that they started a flagellant procession of their own, comprised of 565 people. Gilles does not tell us which route they took, but only recalls that they went 'through France all the way to Soissons'. Unsurprisingly, accounts with regard to flagellants in nearby Valenciennes tell a similar story.[19]

The success of the Tournai procession as a religious event with a strong regional appeal proved to be long-lasting. This is confirmed by the number of invitations that the municipality of Tournai sent to related towns in 1404 and 1413; they were addressed to towns in Flanders (Bruges, Ghent, Ypres etc.), in Brabant (Antwerp, Leuven, Brussels), in Hainault (Mons, Maubeuge and Valenciennes) and in Picardy (Saint-Omer, Bethune, Arras).[20] It is obvious that Tournai, just like Arras, formed the heart of an urban devotional network. These networks partly overlapped: both covered the region between the western

[18] The text of the song has survived in French and Dutch: *Corpus inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis Neerlandicae*, ed. Paul Fredericq, 5 vols. (Ghent, 1889–1902), II, 1136–1140.

[19] Gilles le Muisit, *Chronique et annales*, ed. Henri Lemaître (Paris, 1906), 231–232, 241–242. Compare the sources in *Corpus inquisitionis*, II, 96–141; For Valenciennes, see: Hubert Jedin, Kenneth Scott Latourette and Jochen Martin, *Atlas zur Kirchengeschichte. Die christlichen Kirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Freiburg, 2004), map 65.

[20] Alfred Cauchie, *La grande procession de Tournai* (Leuven/Paris, 1892), 65 nr. 14; 65 nr. 22.

parts of Brabant and Picardy, even though the individual towns often differed. Taking the flagellant movement as an indication, it appears that the centre of gravity by the middle of the fourteenth century had shifted towards the north, with a particular emphasis on the Flemish towns. The town of Dordrecht in Holland formed the most northerly outpost. Still, we may assume that the Arras and Tournai events are just the tip of the iceberg, small parts of a far more encompassing cultural exchange. The intensity of the exchange, and especially the coordination involved, is apparent from the fact that many towns changed the date of the festivities in order to allow participants to visit as many meetings as possible.[21]

The existence of such a pattern of dynamic interurban exchange is confirmed by other kinds of festivities that were organised in many towns in the late middle ages and that were not—or not primarily—of a religious character: the meetings of the shooting guilds, *schuttersgilden* in Dutch, *corporations d'archers* in French. The shooting guilds were established from the early fourteenth century onwards, as semi-professional militias of the towns, in order to safeguard law and order inside the town walls and to allow military expeditions outside.[22] Except for their military tasks, however, they often functioned in the same way as many other urban fraternities: they formed a religious and social safety net for the members—and it is at this point that the religious factors appear again. In some cases, like in Brussels, a separate 'social' brotherhood came into existence, closely linked to but actually independent of the semi-professional military branch. Through their social functions, the shooting associations obviously also developed an important cultural role.[23] Although their activities were at first restricted to the local sphere, the *corporations* developed into agents which represented the towns' communities.

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[21] Roger Chartier, *Lectures et lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1987), 30–31; Jelle Koopmans, 'Toneelgeschiedenis rond de grens. Drama in de Noord-Franse steden', in *Spel en spektakel. Middeleeuws toneel in de Lage Landen*, ed. Hans van Dijk and Bart Ramakers (Amsterdam, 2001), 83–97, at 87.

[22] Theo Reintges, *Ursprung und Wesen der spätmittelalterlichen Schützengilden*, Rheinisches Archiv 58 (Bonn, 1963); M. Carasso-Kok, 'Der stede scut. De schutterijen in de Hollandse steden tot het einde der zestiende eeuw', in *Schutters in Holland. Kracht en zenuwen van de stad*, ed. M. Carasso-Kok and J. Levy-van Halm (Zwolle/Haarlem, 1988), 16–35.

[23] Robert Stein, 'Cultuur en politiek in Brussel in de vijftiende eeuw', in *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de Middeleeuwen*, ed. H. Pleij *et al.*, Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de Middeleeuwen 4 (Amsterdam, 1991), 228–246, at 228–229.

During the fourteenth century there developed a custom of frequent exchange between shooting associations of the major towns of the Low Countries, who came together to demonstrate their military skills in festive competitions. It is assumed that the tournaments organised by the princes and by some important noblemen served as a model. A striking example of one of these noble *festes* is the one that took place in 1278 in the completely rural area of Le Hem, that is situated in Picardy, between Amiens and Saint-Quentin. The scheme was to organise a series of jousts in Arthurian style. The meeting was attended by many knights, originating from the north of France and the southern Low Countries, while a few even came from the German side of the border.[24] The activities during these tournaments were not limited to jousting, but encompassed feasting, dancing, and processions as well.[25] From the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, the tournaments of the noblemen were often organised inside the major towns, most often in close cooperation with the princes. An interesting example is the joust that was organised in Mechelen in 1379, when the Flemish count Louis of Male invited 'all the nobility' of his own counties Flanders and Artois, of Brabant, governed by his aunt Jeanne, and of Hainault, governed by Albrecht of Bavaria, the future father-in-law of Louis' daughter.[26] This kind of tournament took place everywhere in the region of northern France and the southern Low Countries. In what she calls a 'skeletal list of towns', Juliet Vale mentions Ghent, Bruges, Douai, Lille, Tournai, Valenciennes, Senlis, Saint-Quentin, Amiens, Sant-Omer, Arras, Ypres, Doullens and Aardembourg, all located in Northern France and the Southern Low Countries, and she adds Paris, Compiegne and Rheims as more southerly outposts.[27]

Let us return to the festivities of the shooting guilds. Their meetings first began in the same region as that of the 'skeletal list', but extended somewhat to the north. In Ghent, for instance, in 1330 no less then twenty-five of the archery guilds were assembled to compete for a lion wrought from silver; unfortunately we do not know the exact locations

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[24] Juliet Vale, *Edward III and chivalry. Chivalric society and its context 1270–1350* (Woodbridge, 1982), 12–13; map on page 166. At the contemporary tournament of Chauvency (1285) the participants were divided in two groups, one of them consisting of knights from Brabant, Flanders, Hainault, Hesbaie, Luxemburg, and the Rhine region, the others mainly from the Champagne region and Burgundy (*ibidem*, 6–9, 165).

[25] Reintges, *Ursprung und Wesen*, 118–120; Vale, *Edward III and chivalry*, 25–26.

[26] Edward le Glay, *Histoire des comtes de Flandre jusqu'à l'avènement de la maison de Bourgogne*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1843), 495.

[27] Vale, *Edward III and chivalry*, 26.

from which they originated.[28] Likewise, in 1387 in Mons (Hainault), urban militias from Brabant, Hainault, Holland and Zeeland assembled to measure their strength.[29] One of the most famous encounters took place in 1394 in the town of Tournai—again. The sources relating to this event reveal a close network of contesting guilds of different towns. On 12 April, the 'compaignons arcbalestriers' of Tournai sent a letter to many of the neighbouring towns, in which they announced their intention to organise a *jeu et esbatement del arcbalestre*, which would take place on the Grand Place. The town's messengers took this letter to the guilds which were to be invited. It appears that one of them visited thirty-six towns, that were located in seven different principalities on the German side of the border (table I).

Table I. Location of towns invited to the shooting competition in Tournai, 1394.

Principality	Invited
Brabant	12
Flanders (German part)	2
Hainault	5
Holland	11
Liège	4
Utrecht	1
Mechelen	1
TOTAL	36

There must have been at least one other messenger with a letter addressed to the towns lying on the western side of the river Scheldt, that were subject to the king of France, since the prizes were all won by shooting associations from the 'French' part of the Low Countries: Bruges, Ypres and Douai, all situated in Flanders. The only town mentioned that was lying outside the Low Countries was Paris, but it was the odd man out, for Paris' *compagny* received the prize for having travelled the longest distance.[30] Apart from the prizewinners we do not know if the invited towns actually participated in the festivities.

[28] Frans de Potter, *Gent, van den oudsten tijd tot heden*, 8 vols. (s.l., s.d.), II, 150.
[29] Sergio Boffa, *Warfare in medieval Brabant, 1356–1406* (Rochester, 2004), 146.
[30] L.P. Gachard, 'Programme d'un concours d'arbalète, proposé par le grand serment des arbalétriers de la ville de Tournai', in *Collection des documents inédits concernant l'histoire de la Belgique*, ed. L.P. Gachard, 3 vols. (Brussels, 1833–1835), I, 118–127.

There is even more evidence for the competition that took place, nearly half a century later, in Ghent. In March 1440, the Ghent shooting guild of Saint George sent three messengers to 106 towns in Flanders, Artois, Hainault, Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Guelders, Picardy etc. (see table II for a complete list); there is no trace of the fourth messenger in the sources, but he probably went to some of the Flemish towns and to Brabant. The guilds invited were located in a large area, stretching from Cleves in the east to the Channel coast in the west, and from the Somme-towns in the south to Kampen in the north. Only half the guilds that had been invited arrived on time for the start of the festivities on June 5, but even so, no fewer then fifty-six of them made their way to Ghent. They all came from the southern Low Countries (roughly the area stretching from Maastricht and eastern Brabant to Saint-Omer, see table II). Not just the major towns, like Ypres, Lille, and Brussels attended, but the tiny communities of Damme and Menin (circa 1600 inhabitants) sent a deputation as well. Even representatives of the ducal court made an appearance. It is striking that most towns situated outside the region of the southern Low Countries and northern France declined the invitation. In part, this can be explained by the long distance, but that does not apply to the towns of Holland and especially Zeeland. It is also an indication that these towns were less integrated into the cultural network.

Table II. Ghent archery competition in 1440. Number of guilds invited and attending[31]

Province	Invited	Attending
Brabant	3*	13
Flanders	29*	26
Artois, Picardy, Northern France	22	5
Hainault, Tournai, Cambrai	20	11
Holland, Zeeland	11	0
Namur	4	0
Liège	3	1
Utrecht, Guelders, Northern Low Countries	8	0
Gulik, Overmaze	6	0
TOTALS	106	56

* Numbers are too low, due to the loss of one of the sources.

[31] De Potter, *Gent*, I, 153–158, 161–164. I have omitted the duke's archers.

In the end, a company of five hundred and eighty archers marched into Ghent, but they were accompanied by thousands and thousands of other participants: from Brussels alone some 800 visitors arrived besides the ten contestants—that is nearly 3.5 per cent of the Brussels' population. Even more remarkable is the massive influx of eight hundred and ninety archers and their companions from the Flemish town of Oudenaarde with its approximately six and a half thousand inhabitants.[32]

Of course, this kind of meeting was first of all intended to test the skills of the archers, in a competition of shooting the popinjay. However, just like their noble counterparts, the meetings were cultural contests as well. During the 1394 Tournai contest, prizes were offered for the best archers—of course—but also for the guilds 'qui feront les plus gracieuz jeux et esbatemens sans vilonnie'.[33] In Ghent, 1440, prizes were offered for plays performed in Dutch and, separately, for plays performed in French, for the group that made the most beautiful entry, and for the *company* that designed the most handsome quarter.[34]

In view of the cultural character of these meetings, the shooting competitions seem to be a precursor of the competitions of the chambers of rhetoric, the literary societies that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries appeared in so many of the towns in the Low Countries, large and small. Chambers of rhetoric are guilds or confraternities that devote themselves to the practice of vernacular theatre and poetry. They are in a way related to the companies of archers, to artisan guilds and to religious confraternities but, in contrast to the other organisations, their main efforts were directed towards literary entertainment.[35]

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[32] Peter Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition des réseaux urbains des Pays-Bas au Moyen Âge', in *Villes de Flandre et d'Italie (XIII^e–XVI^e siècle). Les enseignements d'une comparaison*, ed. Élisabeth Crouzet-Pavan and Élodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, Studies in European urban history (1100–1800) 12 (Turnhout, 2008), 29–63, at 58.

[33] This document was edited in 1833 and 1840 by Gachard in *Collection des documents*, I, 118–127 and by A.G. Chotin, *Histoire de Tournai et du Tournésis, depuis les temps reculés jusqu'à nos jours*, 2 vols. (Tournai, 1840), I, 349–357.

[34] De Potter, *Gent*, I, 532–537. For a comparable shootout in Mechelen, 1404: Dirk Coigneau, '1 februari 1404. De Mechelse voetboogschutters schrijven een wedstrijd uit', in *Een theatergeschiedenis der Nederlanden. Tien eeuwen drama en theater in Nederland en Vlaanderen*, ed. R.L. Erenstein (Amsterdam, 1996), 33–35.

[35] Anne-Laure van Bruaene, '"A wonderfull tryumfe, for the wynnyng of pryse". Guilds, ritual, theatre, and the urban network in the southern Low Countries, ca. 1450–1650', *Renaissance quarterly* 59 (2006), 374–405, at 375–376; compare: Anne-Laure van Bruaene, *Om beters wille. Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400–1650)* (Amsterdam, 2008), 18.

The origin of these chambers is obscure, which is partly a consequence of the lack of sources but also of the insufficient definition of the institutions as such. The oldest references can be found in Hainault, Arras and French-speaking Flanders, probably in the towns of Arras, Valenciennes and Lille.[36] To use an onomastic argument, the term *rhetoricien* appears in the fourteenth century and refers to the important vernacular poets of the French court society. Around 1400 the expression is used in an urban setting in the French-speaking regions of the Low Countries to indicate a group or a fraternity devoted to literary pursuits. In 1406 the rhetoricians of Mons in Hainault are mentioned; in 1417 a *Compagnie de gens d'église nommée rhétorique* existed in Laon.[37] Only later, in 1441, a Middle Dutch equivalent appears, when the *ghesellen van der retorike* in Oudenaarde are mentioned and a few years later a *Broederscip van der rethorique* called 'the Fountain' was established in Ghent. From the middle of the fifteenth century, a dense network developed all over the Dutch-speaking regions. Starting in Flanders, it extended over Brabant, later over Zeeland and Holland. The first one in Holland was established in 1480. Later on—and with much less intensity—the movement spread over the eastern parts of the Low Countries. Though initiated by the large towns, from the sixteenth century onwards small villages had their chamber as well, especially in Flanders.[38]

Just like the shooting fraternities, the chambers of rhetoric developed a culture of interurban cultural rivalry and exchange in the form of the so called *landjuwelen*, drama festivals. The chambers developed out of an older tradition of urban contests that appeared from the 1430s onwards in Flanders and Brabant, festivals that were principally or

[36] Dirk Coigneau, 'De const van rhetoriken, drama and delivery', in *Rhetoric—rhétoriqueurs—rederijkers*, ed. J. Koopmans *et al.*, Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse akademie van wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde NR 162 (Amsterdam, 1995), 123–140, at 125. The francophone roots of the phenomenon are illustrated by the substantial array of French loanwords used: Jelle Koopmans, 'Rhétorique de cour et rhétorique de ville', in *Rhetoric—rhétoriqueurs—rederijkers*, 67–81, at 71–72.

[37] Koopmans, 'Toneelgeschiedenis rond de grens', 86. Compare Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 52, map 2.

[38] Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 27–51, 101–103 and passim; Arjan van Dixhoorn, *Lustige geesten. Rederijkers en hun Kamers in het publieke leven van de noordelijke Nederlanden in de vijftiende, zestiende en zeventiende eeuw* (s.l., 2004), 69–77; B.A.M. Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren. Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in Oudenaarde tussen Middeleeuwen en Moderne Tijd* (Amsterdam, 1996), 93–104.

exclusively devoted to acting.[39] In the later decades of the fifteenth century, both the frequency and scale of these meetings and the commitment of the chambers gradually increased, as the dukes of Burgundy became involved. At the Leuven *landjuweel* of 1478, for instance, chambers from Flanders and Brabant were present. Fifteen years later, in 1493 in Mechelen, chambers from the north of the Low Countries made their first appearance, and again in 1496 in Antwerp.[40]

At first sight the network that was established by Leuven University in the fifteenth century, appears to be of a completely different order from the meetings of shooting fraternities and chambers of rhetoric, for this concerns foremost individual burghers, and not more or less organised fraternities. There are elements of resemblance, however; the University of Leuven was an urban institution, even if it belonged to a far larger, pan-European, network of learning. It was located in the town, and the municipality of Leuven played a major role in its establishment and paid the stipends of the teachers. The urban character was also reflected in the composition of the population of students: the great majority of them originated from the urban bourgeoisie. Leuven University, like its sister institutions, formed its own 'moral entity', an identity as it were, which developed in relation with the local and princely administration, the local population and especially the visiting students.[41]

In the early fifteenth century, higher education in the Low Countries was a burning issue. Usually, studious youths from the Low Countries went to the universities of Cologne, Paris or Orleans, but due to the political and military tension in northern France and in the region between the rivers Maas and Rhine, these universities were no longer a tempting prospect. For that reason, Leuven's city council had taken the initiative to found the university. In 1418 the municipality began by

[39] Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 33.

[40] See the manuscript version of Van Bruaene's dissertation *Om beters wille* (Ghent, 2003–2005), III, 357–361.

[41] Walter Rüegg, 'Themes', in *A history of the university in Europe. I. Universities in the Middle Ages*, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (Cambridge, 1992), 3–34, at 28 and passim; Rainer Christoph Schwinges, 'Student education, student life', in *ibidem*, 195–243, at 202–204; Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, 'Rich men, poor men. Social stratification and social representation at the university (13th–16th centuries)', in *Showing status. Representations of social positions in the late Middle Ages*, ed. W.P. Blockmans and A. Janse (Turnhout, 1999), 159–175, at 164.

inviting a few learned scholars to teach at the local chapter school.[42] A few years later, Duke John IV of Brabant began to support the project, and in consultation with the chapter of the church of St Peter and the Leuven magistrate, he addressed a petition to Pope Martin V. The petition itself is lost, but large parts of it, such as the quotation below, are entered into the papal bull of foundation dated, 9 December 1425.

> In the duchy of Brabant…and also in the bishoprics of Liège, Cambrai, Utrecht, Thérouanne and Tournai, there are many well known and famous localities, flowering because of their devout population and their material wellbeing. In spite of this, there is no locality where they can attend a *studium generale* in the *artes*.[43]

It is understandable that the bishoprics are indicated and not the principalities; after all it was a request to the pope. But still, the list is remarkable, for it concerns virtually all the bishoprics of the Low Countries, roughly corresponding to the political territory a century later—Arras should have been added—but none of the bishoprics outside the Low Countries.

If the ambition was to create an academic service centre for the whole of the Low Countries, what was the outcome? The foundation of Leuven University proved to be an immediate success. It resulted in an explosive growth in the number of students from the Low Countries, by approximately three hundred per cent in a few years' time. At the height of its popularity, in the 1470s, Leuven University registered some five hundred students per year. Due to difficulties with the sources we cannot establish the origin of the students for the second and third quarter of the fifteenth century, but on the basis of the matricula that have been handed down, we can do so for a later period (see table III). Of course, one may object because up to twenty-five per cent of the students were not listed in this documentation, but still the numbers in table III are revealing. An overwhelming majority of the students originated from Brabant, Flanders, Hainault, Holland and Zeeland, the provinces that are often indicated as the core provinces of the Low Countries: eighty-four per cent, to which a substantial number from the prince-bishopric of Liège can be added. The number of students from the north-eastern parts of the Low Countries is

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[42] Marc Nelissen, Jan Roegiers and Erik van Mingroot, *De stichtingsbul van de Leuvense universiteit 1425–1914* (Leuven, 2000), 69–75.

[43] Nelissen, Roegiers, and Van Mingroot, *De stichtingsbul*, 2.

negligible. The same applies for the students from outside the Low Countries. In the light of these numbers, it is understandable that the students of Leuven University were divided in four nations: Brabant, Flanders, Holland and 'Gallia'.[44]

Table III. Number of students at Leuven University, 1485–1527[45]

Principality	Percentage
Brabant	35
Flanders	19
Hainault	8.6
Holland	14.8
Zeeland	6.5
Namur	1.2
Tournai (prince-bishopric)	1
Liège (prince-bishopric)	4.9
Luxemburg	0.7
North-eastern Low Countries	3.9
Low Countries	**94.8**
Outside Low Countries	5.2

The student population of Leuven University shows, just like the religious, military and cultural examples discussed before, the existence of a network of relations between towns in the southern and western Low Countries.

When discussing urban networks, historical geographers most often take quantitative data as their point of departure, like the size of the population or economic exchange.[46] Data about forms of cultural exchange are by definition less hard, and these networks are far less well investigated.[47] Still, my findings so far show that an extensive cultural network existed that bound together a large number of major

[44] *De universiteit te Leuven 1425–1975* (Leuven, 1976), 96; compare: *De universiteit te Leuven 1425–1985* (Leuven, 1986), 36.

[45] *De universiteit te Leuven 1425–1985*, 54.

[46] Harold Carter, *An introduction to urban historical geography* (Londen, 1983), 96–107; compare: Jan de Vries, 'Problems in the measurement, description, and analysis of historical urbanization', in *Urbanization in history. A process of dynamic interactions*, ed. Ad van der Woude, Akira Hayami and Jan de Vries (Oxford, 1995), 43–60.

[47] Compare: Étienne François, 'The German urban network between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Cultural and demographic indicators', in *Urbanization in history*, 84–100.

towns. From the twelfth century onwards a cultural network developed in the French-speaking region of northern France and southern Flanders, especially in the towns of Arras and Tournai. There are fewer sources available for the Dutch-speaking regions and it is possible, perhaps even plausible, that a comparable network existed more to the north, for instance around the towns of a size similar to Bruges and Ghent, but more research is needed to establish this.[48] When we take a chronological approach, a certain pattern seems evident. Proceeding from the assumption that its origins were in northern France, the network gradually expanded, especially in northern and eastern directions: successively towns from Flanders (twelfth century), Brabant (thirteenth century) to Holland-Zeeland (fourteenth or fifteenth century) were incorporated. Around 1400, a system of cultural exchange existed that comprised virtually the whole of the western Low Countries, a region that by political and economic historians has been described as the 'core provinces'. Its main fabric was formed by the major towns of the Low Countries, but smaller towns also participated. In the fifteenth century the system became ever denser, and this late medieval trend continued in early modern times, when the competition-culture of the chambers of rhetoric developed and created a dense network, in which the small settlements participated. The role of the princes is remarkable in this context: in one way or another they were involved in nearly all the examples given.

Diverging boundaries

Did the urban cultural network coincide with networks or regions of a demographic, linguistic, political, institutional, clerical or economic character? We should keep in mind, of course, that the boundaries of the cultural network had a highly dynamic character and expanded over time. We can determine first of all that the area under discussion was one of the most densely populated zones of Europe.[49] It appears that the increase of the cultural network more or less coincided with

[48] Walter Prevenier, 'Court and city culture in the Low Countries from 1100 to 1530', in *Medieval Dutch literature in its European context*, ed. E. Kooper (Cambridge, 1994), 11–27, at 14.

[49] Compare: Jan de Vries, *European urbanization, 1500–1800* (London, 1984), 151–172.

demographic changes and the level of urbanisation in particular. With regard to the Low Countries, the first important towns developed in Walloon Flanders and Artois in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but soon, urbanisation extended to Flanders proper from the thirteenth century onwards. It reached Brabant from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and spread to Holland especially from the fifteenth century onwards.[50]

A majority of scholars would consider language to be one of the most important 'objective' elements that make up a common culture—or a shared identity. When David Abulafia, for instance, approached the concept of cultural frontier, he virtually equated culture with language.[51] In publications by scholars dealing on a more general level with medieval and early modern identities, the significance of language is put into perspective. Although it forms one of the characteristics that people use to distinguish themselves, depending on the actual circumstances, it is often of only moderate importance.[52] This point is illustrated by the cases discussed here. The linear language boundary that divides the Low Countries nowadays into a Walloon and a Flemish part appears to be a myth, a creation, perhaps even an invention of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in the slipstream of the development of the modern nation-state. Things were far less clear-cut in the Middle Ages. A broad area of transition existed, even if the larger towns often were either French or Dutch-speaking.[53] In the cultural network reconstructed here, language does not seem to play an important part at all. People from the Flemish-speaking towns of the Low Countries, like Ghent, Bruges, Brussels and Leuven, intermingled smoothly with those from the Romanic parts, like Tournai and Arras.

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[50] Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition des réseaux urbains', 31.

[51] David Abulafia, 'Introduction: seven types of ambiguity, c. 1100–c. 1500', in *Medieval frontiers. Concepts and practices*, ed. David Abulafia and Nora Berend (Aldershot, 2002), 19–35, at 24–29.

[52] R.R. Davies, 'The peoples of Britain and Ireland, 1100–1400. IV. Language and historical mythology', *Transactions of the Royal historical society* 6th series 7 (1997), 1–24, at 1.

[53] Luc de Grauwe, 'Westfrankisch: bestaat dat? Over Westfrankisch en Oudnederlands in het oud-theodiske variëteitencontinuüm', in *Quod vulgo dicitur. Studien zum Altniederländischen*, ed. Willy Pijnenburg, Arend Quak and Tanneke Schoonheim, Amterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik 57 (Amsterdam, 2003), 93–111; for the language frontier in general, see: Danny Lamarcq and Marc Rogge, *De taalgrens van de oude tot de nieuwe Belgen* (Leuven, 1996), 10; R. Willemyns and W. Daniëls, *Het verhaal van het Vlaams. De geschiedenis van het Nederlands in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden* (Antwerpen/Utrecht, 2003), 48–51.

Many pilgrims from Flanders, Brabant, Holland and Zeeland visited the processions in Hainault and Artois and many people from Artois participated in the shooting contests in the north. In 1440, nineteen of the fifty-six participating associations came from French-speaking towns or regions. Even in cases where language really mattered—when stage plays were being delivered—no distinction was made. In the programme of the archery contest of Tournai 1394, a prize was promised for 'les compaignons qui venront de cité ou de bonne ville fermee, qui feront les plus gracieux esbatemens sans vilonnie', without any provision for the language. During the 1440 Ghent meeting, separate prizes were promised for the best plays in Dutch and in French.[54]

Another boundary that was easily crossed is that between the Empire and France. This frontier strongly diverged from the language boundary, with French-speaking parts belonging to the Empire and Flemish-speaking parts to the kingdom of France. From the time that Lower Lotharingia was joined with the Empire, in 925, the river Scheldt had formed the frontier with France in the north; near Cambrai, at circa 50 degrees latitude, it bent westward until it reached the river Maas. Most of the principalities of the Low Countries were situated in the Empire and, by and large in a feudal sense, subject to the emperor.[55] Brabant, Hainault, Holland, and Zeeland belonged to the Empire; Flanders, Artois and Picardy by and large to the kingdom of France. The town of Tournai was situated exactly on the French side of the border.[56] Even our oldest source shows that the 'French' drops of wax of the miraculous candle were given to the 'German' town of Brussels. Gilles li Muisis' account of the flagellant movement (1349), in particular, shows the massive attendance of both 'German' and 'French' groups: eleven groups originated in France and eight in Germany.

For practical political purposes, the boundaries between the duchies, counties and lordships that made up the Low Countries were far more important than the boundary between the Empire and France. Inside the principalities, moreover, distinct urban networks came into being, in which towns joined to represent their political and financial

[54] Gachard, 'Programme', 123; De Potter, *Gent*, I, 535.

[55] In c. 1300, many princes of the Low Countries were vassal of both the German emperor and the French king: Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke, 'Reichsgrenzen und Vasalitäten. Zur Einordnung des französisch-deutschen Grenzraums im Mittelalter', *Jahrbuch für westdeutsche Landesgeschichte* 22 (1996), 113–178, at 117, 135–150.

[56] Ilja Mieck, 'Deutschlands Westgrenze', in *Deutschlands Grenzen in der Geschichte*, ed. Alexander Demandt (Munich, 1991), 197–239, at 203–212.

interests, vis-à-vis the prince, a development that would eventually result in the emergence of the Third Estate.[57] At first sight these 'national' networks did not play a cultural role, for it is evident from the examples presented that the participants originated from various principalities. Still, when dynasties created spheres of influence and established personal unions between several principalities, this cooperation could easily cross the existing provincial borders.[58] In this context, it is remarkable that what can be considered the oldest nucleus of the urban network, was situated in the Flemish sphere of influence that existed in the second half of the twelfth century, especially during the reign of Count Philip of Alsace (1157/1168–1191), a power block that stretched over Flanders, Artois, Vermandois and to a lesser extent over Hainault. The possible interaction between the political development and cultural interchange in the towns appeared again in the second half of the fourteenth and in the fifteenth centuries, when the counts of Flanders and their successors, the dukes of Burgundy started to enlarge their sphere of influence in the Low Countries.

Nowhere did the cultural network reconstructed here coincide with the formal ecclesiastical domains. Even the oldest references—the drops of wax, dispersed in the twelfth century—refer to four different bishoprics: Arras, Therouanne, Tournai and Cambrai, situated in two different archbishoprics. Later developments ignored the boundaries dividing the dioceses of Liège and Utrecht. When the new monastic orders created their own provinces during the late Middle Ages, they applied criteria that differed from those investigated here—and most often from those of the dioceses too—, which were mainly determined by language or by the subordination to either the Empire or to France.[59]

When Étienne Favier researched the network formed by the German universities in the early modern period, he ended up with a structure that was completely different from the one that would result from political boundaries or quantitative economic or demographic data.[60]

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[57] Robert Stein, Anita Boele and Wim Blockmans, 'Whose community? The origin and development of the concept of bonum in Flanders, Brabant and Holland (12th–15th century)', to appear in *Bonum commune*, ed. Anne-Laure van Bruaene and Élodie Lecuppre-Desjardin.

[58] André Uyttebrouck, 'Phénomènes de centralisation dans les Pays-Bas avant Philippe le Bon', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 69 (1991), 872–904.

[59] Schmidt, *Kirche, Staat, Nation*, 392–415.

[60] François, 'The German urban network', 84–100.

This appears not to be the case in the network investigated here, for its oldest traces appear to coincide to a certain extent with the commercial networks that came into being. The economic development of the towns started in Artois and Walloon Flanders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, especially with the advent of the cloth industry.[61] Security for merchants, when trading, importing raw materials and exporting final products, was of major concern. At first the towns individually cared for the well-being of their merchants, but soon they started to cooperate when travelling abroad. Especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries cooperative structures came into being: the *Hanse flamande de Londres* was active, uniting merchants from the Flemish towns of Bruges, Ypres, Lille etc. The cultural urban network under discussion here is reflected far better in the so called *Hanse of the seventeen towns*, which appears in our sources around 1270. In order to safeguard their textile trade at the Champagne fairs, some twenty-five (and not seventeen) towns joined forces. The *Hanse* comprised towns north and south of the language frontier, east and west of the boundary of the Empire and crossed all provincial boundaries: towns from Flanders, Artois, Tournai and Picardy.[62]

It appears that the extension of the cultural network to the north during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is also reflected in the economic development of the fourteenth century. Quantitative data are lacking, but there are random indications in the form of treaties. For instance, in 1337, the Flemish towns united with their Brabant, Hainault, Holland and Zeeland counterparts, forming a treaty in order to guarantee law and order and the safety of the merchants. Though this treaty probably never was formalised, two years later the duke of Brabant and the count of Flanders negotiated—and confirmed—a similar one at the instigation of their mutual towns, which is considered to be a monument of urban self-awareness.[63] The importance of the

[61] For a recent overview: Stabel, 'Composition et recomposition des réseaux urbains', passim.

[62] Henri Pirenne, 'La hanse flamande de Londres', *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique* 37 (1899), 66–108; Louis Carolus-Barré, 'Les XVII villes. Une hanse vouée au grand commerce de la draperie', *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions & belles-lettres* 1965, 20–31.

[63] L.P.C. Bergh, *Gedenkstukken tot opheldering der Nederlandsche geschiedenis* (Utrecht, 1849), 134–158; Piet Avonds, 'Beschouwingen over het ontstaan en de evolutie van het samenhorigheidsbesef in de Nederlanden (14de–19de eeuw)', in *Cultuurgeschiedenis in de Nederlanden van de Renaissance naar de Romantiek. Liber*

commercial connections between Flanders and Brabant was emphasised by Philip the Fair in 1398. When he tried to convince the Brabant States to recognise him as their future duke he pointed to the fact that their commercial interests were linked to the county of Flanders which he possessed.[64] In the years 1425–1433, crucial to the formation of the Low Countries, the economic network actually formed an element in their political unification as a personal union under the house of Burgundy. It was partly for economic reasons that the towns of Hainault, Holland, Zeeland and Brabant decided to opt for the Burgundian dukes as their new prince, when their own dynasties became extinct. In this way, they were able to share in the prosperity of Flanders.[65]

Urban values

The cultural expressions discussed here are quite different from one another; they are chosen because they mirror the extent of the cultural network, and not because they can necessarily be considered to be representative for the culture as such. We would need other sources to explore the precise character of the urban culture that developed in the Low Countries and northern France. An additional problem is that the region under investigation has been become divided, and is now spread over the modern states of Belgium, France and the Netherlands, which all have different scholarly traditions; the agendas of most scholars coincide with the frontiers of the modern nation-states. The fact that the region is divided by a linguistic boundary has done nothing to help the research into medieval literature, especially. In the present state of research, it is therefore possible only to indicate a few general tendencies.

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amicorum J. Andriessen s.j., A. Keersmakers, P. Lenders s.j., ed. R. van Uytven (Leuven/Amersfoort, 1986), 45–58, at 45–49.

[64] This piece is edited in Jean Froissart, *Œuvres*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 26 vols. (Brussels, 1867–1877), XIII, 342–344; compare: Jean Stengers, 'Philippe le Hardi et les États de Brabant', in *Hommage au professeur Paul Bonenfant*, ed. G. Despy, M.A. Arnould and M. Martens (Brussels, 1965), 383–408, at 400–402.

[65] Robert Stein, 'Stände und Staat in den Niederlanden', in *Europa im späten Mittelalter. Politik—Gesellschaft—Kultur*, ed. Rainer C. Schwinges, Christian Hesse and Peter Moraw, Historische Zeitschrift. Beiheft 40 (Munich, 2006) 205–235.

Some scholars have pointed to the fact that the towns in the region under investigation share some cultural-institutional particularities: the existence of societies of poets as such in most of the towns, the development of a tightly interwoven competition structure and the appearance of the *chambres de rhétorique* and of the bishop of fools. Furthermore, a specific type of passion play, lasting more than one day, appears to be unique to this region.[66] In his *Lectures et lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien regime*, Roger Chartier considers the urban culture of northern France and the southern Low Countries to be a political ideology: 'une idéologie, à la fois citadine et laïque', but it is doubtful that this gets us any further, although the civic character is obvious, the lay character is dubious. Others have pointed out that a fundamental political and cultural antithesis existed between the words used to convey values in urban literature on the one hand, and those expressed in courtly literature on the other.[67] According to this view, the cultural role of the princes with regard to the towns was first and foremost dictated by their urge to centralise power; while the towns, for their part, wanted to emphasise their independence. Nevertheless, if confrontations between urban and princely culture were not uncommon, they appear to be the exception. In general an intense interaction existed. This is apparent in the examples given. In virtually all cases, the princes—or bishops—offered support; think of the role the dukes of the Burgundian-Habsburg house played in encouraging meetings of the chambers of rhetoric.[68]

The examples investigated here share many traits with what is known as 'civic religion'; it was a culture that combined religious and socio political values, a collective, figurative religion, meant to pacify the urban population and enhance love for the town and for God.[69] It was not exclusively religious values that were expressed by or in the towns of the Low Countries, however. Individual and collective local

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[66] Koopmans, 'Toneelgeschiedenis rond de grens', 86.

[67] Peter Arnade, *Realms of ritual. Burgundian ceremony and civic life in late medieval Ghent* (Ithaca/London, 1996), 5.

[68] Éveline van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes, pas d'armes dans les villes de Flandre à la fin du Moyen Âge (1300–1486)*, Mémoires et documents de l'École des chartes 47 (Paris, 1996), passim; compare: Andrew Brown, 'Urban jousts in the later Middle Ages. The White Bear of Bruges', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 78 (2000), 315–330; see for the role of the dukes of Burgundy in this respect: Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 53–61.

[69] Chartier, *Lectures et lecteurs*, 30; Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 205, 208.

virtues of a more secular character were stressed as well. Far more than their courtly counterparts, urban authors were inclined to emphasise certain individual virtues, like diligence, wisdom, social mobility and self-help. But there were also collective values, like the honour of the town, the maintenance of law and order inside the urban territory and the advancement of urban economy.[70] The competition existing in the urban network created an excellent ambiance to elaborate on the virtue and honour of one's hometown, at the same time creating a fraternal rivalry—though it is known to have ended sometimes in bitter enmity.[71] A distant echo of this pride may be found in the opening lines of the invitations for the archery festivals of both Mechelen 1394 and Ghent 1440, which addressed the archer guilds of 'all good, privileged and free towns'.[72] In the late sixteenth century, the towns' privileged status would be used to legitimise the Dutch Revolt.[73]

In a political context, the values communicated in the urban network are probably best summarised by the concept of *bonum commune* that appeared in the middle of the twelfth century in the early town communities. It is interesting to observe the festivities of 1336, on Arras' marketplace. Civilians from Bruges, Compiegne, Ypres, Saint-Quentin Valenciennes, Lille, Arras (and probably from two other towns) gathered there, dressed as the 'Nine Worthies'. These nine worthies, three pagan, three Jewish and three Christian heroes, Alexander the Great, King Arthur and Charlemagne among them, were the most perfect warriors known to mankind. More important in the view of the urban elites would have been the fact that they were considered inexhaustible

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[70] These findings are summarised in: Herman Pleij, 'Inleiding: op belofte van profijt', in *Op belofte van profijt*, 8–51, at 25–46.

[71] Laurent Feller, 'La fête faillie. Les événements de mai (1284, Lille-Douai)', *Revue du Nord* 334 (2000), 9–33.

[72] Gachard, 'Programme', 123; De Potter, *Gent*, I, 532; compare: Élodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La ville des cérémonies. Essai sur la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons*, Studies in European urban history (1100–1800) 4 (Turnhout, 2004), 141–145.

[73] For the situation in the Republic of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see: J. Huizinga, 'Nederland's beschaving in de zeventiende eeuw', in Huizinga, *Verzamelde werken*, II, 429; A.J.C. Rüter, 'De Nederlandse natie en het Nederlandse volkskarakter', in A.J.C. Rüter, *Historische studies over mens en samenleving*, Sociaalhistorische studiën 3 (Assen, 1967), 303–321, at 314; J.J. Woltjer, 'Dutch privileges, real and imaginary', *Britain and the Netherlands. Volume V. Some political mythologies*, ed. J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann (The Hague, 1975), 19–35.

fighters for justice and the common good.[74] The *bonum commune* first of all concerned the maintenance of *pax et justitia*, guaranteed by the administration of justice and the making of laws. Due to the growing financial and political power of the towns, the concept was transferred from the local sphere to larger, territorially defined entities, like principalities. Pacification of town and countryside was not just in the interest of the people living in one town or region, but of all travellers, pilgrims and merchants alike; evidence of the towns' cooperation in this respect is abundant. Willy-nilly the prince was considered to be the emanation of this common good. In the end, it was appropriated by the princes themselves and by the early modern state, but that is of no concern to us here.[75] Besides the maintenance of peace and justice, economic interests also played a role in the *bonum commune*. This is emphasised by the intense involvement of merchant and craft guilds during the princely joyous entries.[76]

Conclusion

When Jacqueline of Bavaria in 1433 transferred her rights to the counties of Hainault, Holland and Zeeland to Philip the Good, at that time prince of Brabant, Flanders and Artois, she remarked: 'Our lands are surrounded by many of his [i.e. Philip's] lands and subjects, who deal

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[74] Wim van Anrooij, *Helden van weleer. De Negen Besten in de Nederlanden (1300–1700)* (Amsterdam 1997), 41, 216; compare: P. Meyer, 'Les neuf preux', *Bulletin de la Siciété des anciens textes français* 9 (1883), 45–56, at 47–48.

[75] Stein, Boele and Blockmans, 'Whose community?'. The concept of *bonum commune* appears to be closely linked to that of civil society. See: Antony Black, *Guild & state. European political thought from the twelfth century to the present* (Brunswick/London, 2003), 32–43. When it first appeared in 1984, the title of this book was: *Guilds and civil society*. Compare Jan Luiten van Zanden and Maarten Prak, 'Towards an economic interpretation of citizenship. The Dutch Republic between medieval communes and modern nation-states', *European review of economic history* 10 (2006), 111–145, at 114 and passim.

[76] Hugo Soly, 'Plechtige intochten in de steden van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de overgang van Middeleeuwen naar Nieuwe Tijd. Communicatie, propaganda, spektakel', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 97 (1984), 341–361. It is also elaborated in one of the few surviving fifteenth-century stage plays from Brussels, 1466: Robert Stein, 'Cultuur in context. Het spel van Menych Sympel (1466) als spiegel van de Brusselse politieke verhoudingen', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 113 (1998), 289–321, at 313; Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La ville des cérémonies*, 281.

with each other on a daily basis in trade and otherwise'.[77] Jacqueline's claim was valid. Apart from the commercial contacts, there existed an intensive cultural network that developed in the southern Low Countries and in northern France, in fact north and south of the language frontier. Large numbers of town dwellers travelled around to participate in religious ceremonies and later in military and literary festivals and in education. It is inevitable that the cultural exchange also affected the character of their culture. The main elements of their culture can be captured by the terms 'civic religion' and *bonum commune*.

Considering the territorial extent of this cultural urban network, its longevity, and common values, we can now ask ourselves whether the concept of 'culture area', as discussed before, is useable. There are arguments for doing so: in the urban network reconstructed here we seem to find a culture that was shared amongst the major towns. It is especially the intensity of the interurban exchange that testifies to this shared culture, more so than the expressions as such. The network reconstructed here had a rationale of its own. It did not coincide with the existing formal areas of political, clerical or linguistic character; it only loosely resembles the zone of a relatively high level of urbanisation and a commercial network maintained by the cloth merchants. It is curious that it complies with all of the very different interpretations that Huizinga, Pirenne and Geyl presented of the character of the union of the Low Countries. It combines the cultural elements argument (not the linguistic one!) brought forward by Geyl with the importance of economic factors addressed by Pirenne, as well as the importance of dynastic involvement advanced by Huizinga.

In the introduction to this essay, I noted that cultural homogeneity is considered to be one of the main constituents of a shared identity. I hope to have demonstrated that a certain cultural homogeneity existed in the region here under discussion. It is possible—though not certain—that the towns fostered a shared identity. But this was no 'national' identity; for a political structure or focal point, like a common dynasty, was lacking. Despite the involvement of bishops and princes, the network was first of all maintained by the efforts of the urban magistrates and fraternities. There was virtually no politicisa-

[77] *Holland bestuurd. Teksten over het bestuur van het graafschap Holland in het tijdvak 1299–1567*, ed. J.A.M.Y. Bos-Rops, J.G. Smit and E.T. van der Vlist, ING-onderzoeksgidsen 4 (The Hague, 2007), 277–292.

tion, centralisation or formalisation. Its most obvious feature was its informality. It was and remained a cultural network, without strong political bonds. It is remarkable though, that the values shared in the network, potentially could be used at the moment that a polity came into existence, as became apparent during the Dutch Revolt.

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMAGINED COMMUNITY OF FRIESLAND IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

Justine Smithuis*

Introduction

In his influential companion to medieval historiography in the northern Low Countries, which appeared in 1932, Jan Romein presented a gloomy view of fifteenth-century Frisian historiography. He described it as 'extremely poor and insignificant, especially when compared with the historiography of Holland and Guelders or with the great activity in the circles of the Modern Devotion in the same century'.[1]

Romein's judgment, based on modern arguments such as style and value for the factual reconstruction of the past, did not encourage the study of Frisian chronicles of this period, to say the least. To the present day these works have received little attention.[2] They are of great interest, however, for the student of identities, or mental attitudes in general. For this type of research, factual errors, mythical elements or stylistic clumsiness are either irrelevant, or precisely the material one is seeking. In this respect, late medieval Frisian historiography contains extremely valuable material. Indeed, a closer look at this 'poor' historiography reveals pronounced images of the Frisian land and people. Some of these images even appear to be unique when compared

* I am very grateful to Professors R.H. Bremmer Jr. and J.A. Mol, and to Dr. R. Stein for their help and advice.

[1] Translated from Jan Romein, *Geschiedenis van de Noord-Nederlandse geschiedschrijving in de Middeleeuwen. Bijdrage tot de beschavingsgeschiedenis* (Haarlem, 1932), 143.

[2] For surveys of Frisian medieval historiography (see also n. 1) see J. Bolhuis van Zeeburgh, *Kritiek der Friesche geschiedschrijving* ('s-Gravenhage, 1873); H. Bruch, *Kroniek der Friese kronieken. Antikritiek op Bolhuis' Kritiek* (Leeuwarden, 1952); R. Steensma, *Het klooster Thabor bij Sneek en zijn nagelaten geschriften* (Leeuwarden, 1970). Focussing on a later period, but still relevant for fifteenth-century historiography is E.H. Waterbolk, *Twee eeuwen Friese geschiedschrijving. Opkomst, bloei en verval van de Friese historiografie in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw* (Groningen, 1952).

with the historiography of the Low Countries or of Europe in general and therefore deserve our full attention.

In this contribution I shall concentrate on some of the fifteenth-century historiographical representations of the Frisian land and people, with the aim of gaining a deeper insight into the development of a collective Frisian self-image and identity.[3] I shall argue that two types of discourse or narrative existed in late medieval Frisian historiography, which I have labelled 'mythical' and 'contemporary', on account of their very different approaches and the contrasting images they produced. These labels are comparable to the distinction sometimes made between *Vergangenheitsgeschichte* and *Zeitgeschichte*.[4] In the mythical narrative, the representation of the past was transformed into a mythology of the Frisian people, while the contemporary approach ignored the legendary traditions completely and focussed on the contingencies in the not too distant past instead. As we shall see, these mythical and contemporary discourses were complementary in their assessment of the Frisian land and people, and can be seen as an expression of the different levels of solidarity existing within their community.

For my argument, I have analysed two fifteenth-century textual traditions as instances of the mythical and contemporary discourses. The mythical narrative will be represented by the case of the *Gesta*-cycle, consisting of a group of closely interrelated texts. The 'Sneek' annalistic tradition, consisting of two short fifteenth-century texts, the *Sneker Kroniekje* ('Sneek Chronicle') and the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge* ('Frisian Accounts') will illustrate the contemporary discourse. In my textual analysis I focus on the use of three types of images or representations of identity:

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[3] I am indebted here to the views of Benedict Anderson who considered identity development as the construction of an 'imagined community' of people by means of images or representations; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (2nd edition; London, 1991). The issue of the existence of a 'national identity' or 'nation', which is central to Anderson's theory, has been avoided here and replaced by the broader and more culturally defined concept of a 'collective identity'. For the discussion and adoption of Anderson's ideas in a medieval context, see, e.g., Véronique Lambert, 'Methodologische beschouwingen bij het onderzoek naar de concepten "natie", "nationalisme" en "nationale identiteit" in de Middeleeuwen', *Jaarboek voor middeleeuwse geschiedenis* 4 (2001), 66–85; Lesley Johnson, 'Imagining communities: medieval and modern', in *Concepts of national identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson and Alan V. Murray (Leeds, 1995), 1–19; and the contribution by Peter Hoppenbrouwers in the present volume.

[4] Compare the introduction of Robert Stein in the present volume.

a) the collective names used for the Frisian territory and people;
b) some basic qualifications attributed to the people and land;
c) any feelings of solidarity connected to the territory and people.

My choice has not been arbitrary. These three aspects can be seen as crucial building blocks in the development of a collective identity. The importance of the use of collective names, for instance, was emphasised by Rees Davies: 'Names are central to the identity of people; to change a people's name is to change its identity; to threaten to abolish its name is to call its very existence into doubt'.[5] In the case of the Frisian lands, the existence or continuity of a collective Frisian name towards the end of the Middle Ages was not self-evident. The Frisian lands were not politically integrated, as we will shortly see. One of the issues addressed in this paper therefore will be to see if and how a collective Frisian identity could flourish in the late Middle Ages, as opposed to the development of other, local or regional, identities.

Political and cultural background

In the fifteenth century, there was no longer a political entity called Friesland. For a politically 'united' Friesland we would have to go back to a period as early as the seventh to ninth centuries, when the Frisians' territory extended from the Scheldt estuary up to the river Weser in northern Germany.[6] This was the time when missionaries such as Willibrord and Boniface tried to convert the Frisians to Christianity. The Frisians were ruled by warlord-kings, until the Franks conquered their territory in the eighth century. Probably on account of cultural differences, the *Lex Frisionum*, a law code drafted for Charlemagne, probably in 802, even then divided Friesland into

[5] R.R. Davies, 'The peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100–1400. II. Names, boundaries and regnal solidarities', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th series 5 (1995), 1–20, at 2. See also his other presidential addresses in the *Transactions*, focussing on diverse aspects of identity development: 6th series 4 (1994), 1–20; 6 (1996), 1–23; and 7 (1997), 1–24.

[6] G. Bakker, 'De grenzen van Frisia tussen 600 en 1150', *It beaken* 24 (1962), 120–130. Recent surveys of Frisian early medieval history: Oebele Vries, 'Geschichte der Friesen im Mittelalter: West- und Ostfriesland', in *Handbuch des Friesischen*, ed. Horst H. Munske (Tübingen, 2001), 538–550, at 538–541 (with further references); Herrius Halbertsma, *Frieslands oudheid. Het rijk van de Friese koningen, opkomst en ondergang* (Utrecht, 2000).

three regions. The first region extended from the Scheldt to the Vlie, the second from the Vlie to the Lauwers, and the third from the Lauwers to the Weser.

Much later, in the fourteenth century, these territorial and cultural divisions had grown larger and Friesland as a whole had become much smaller. Most of the western part of it had been integrated into the county of Holland.[7] What was considered to be Frisian territory by the fourteenth century was limited to the coastal lands between the estuaries of the Vlie and the Weser. This area became divided into relatively small political units (*terrae*) which had their own laws and jurisdictions. None of these lands had a lord, as they were ruled by their own local colleges of judges, elected from the higher strata of the population. In short, a feudal structure, by which one lord ruled as a vassal of the king or the emperor over his subjects, did not develop here, despite attempts, for example by the various counts of Holland to add the lands west of the Lauwers to their territory.[8]

The situation of lordless autonomy, also known as 'Friese Vrijheid', did not last forever. Continued power struggles between noble families made it easier for neighbouring powers to gain control over parts of these lands. In Friesland east of the Ems (Ostfriesland in present-day Germany), power struggles led to the dominance of one Frisian noble family, called Cirksena. In 1464 they obtained the rank of count, subject to the Holy Roman emperor, signalling the beginning of 'normal' lordship in that area. In the so-called Ommelanden, the part of Friesland between the Lauwers and the Ems, the neighbouring town of Groningen successfully interfered in the factional struggles and expanded its sphere of influence through political and military alliances.

In Friesland west of the Lauwers, self-government lasted longest, although party strife was strong here as well, and the counts of Hol-

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[7] Dirk P. Blok, 'Holland und Westfriesland', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 3 (1969), 347–361; *Geschiedenis van Holland. Deel I: tot 1572*, ed. Thimo de Nijs and Eelco Beukers (Hilversum, 2002), 21–75.

[8] There is extensive literature on the *Sonderweg* of Frisian self-government or 'Frisian freedom' in the late Middle Ages, see for example: *Die Friesische Freiheit des Mittelalters—Leben und Legende*, ed. H. van Lengen (Aurich, 2003); Oebele Vries, *Het Heilige Roomse Rijk en de Friese vrijheid* (Leeuwarden, 1986); J.R.G. Schuur, 'De middeleeuwse Friese vrijheid. Een sociaal of een politiek verschijnsel?', *It beaken* 67 (2005), 17–30. For relations with Holland, see *Negen eeuwen Friesland-Holland. Geschiedenis van een haat-liefdeverhouding*, ed. Ph. Breuker and A. Janse (Zutphen, 1997).

land continuously attempted to seize power. In the course of the fifteenth century, however, as the power of the Burgundian and Habsburg dynasties (heirs to the claims of Holland) was growing stronger, the external threats became more and more serious. Duke Albrecht of Saxony finally managed to establish his government in 1498 under supervision of the Habsburgs, leading to the final take-over by Charles V of the Frisian lands, including Groningen, in the first decades of the sixteenth century.[9]

Despite the political fragmentation of the Frisian territories in the late medieval period, they continued to share some important characteristics. On a cultural level, the population living in the lands between the Vlie and Weser shared a common language, Frisian. This language was instrumental in a lively cultural exchange and in the development of a textual community from the thirteenth century onwards.[10] An example of this exchange is the development of a shared Frisian legal tradition. Some of these legal texts contain important legendary and ideological material, for instance on the concept of the Frisian freedom, to which I shall return later.[11] On a political level, apart from sharing the peculiar constitution of the Frisian freedom, there was also some interregional political cooperation on a more daily basis. This happened mostly between neighbouring lands, and sporadically also on a higher level. The best-known examples for pan-Frisian cooperation are the celebrated conventions of the Upstalsboom, which aimed at establishing peace and judicial cooperation between all Frisian lands. The Upstalsboom statutes, however, did not prove to be very effective and conventions were discontinued in the first half of the fourteenth century.[12]

While the political context of the Frisian lands in the late Middle Ages did not offer a great incentive to the formation or continuity of a collective 'Frisian' identity, some elements often considered important in

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[9] Vries, 'Geschichte der Friesen im Mittelalter', 542–548 (with further references); *Fryslân, staat en macht 1450–1650. Bijdragen aan het historisch congres te Leeuwarden van 3 tot 5 juni 1998*, ed. J. Frieswijk *et al.* (Hilversum/Leeuwarden, 1999).

[10] R.H. Bremmer Jr., *Hir is eskriven. Lezen en schrijven in de Friese landen rond 1300* (Hilversum, 2004).

[11] See for example T.S.B. Johnston, 'Old Frisian law and the Frisian freedom ideology. Text and manuscript composition as a marketing device', in *Approaches to old Frisian philology*, ed. R.H. Bremmer Jr., T.S.B. Johnston and O. Vries, *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 49 (Amsterdam, 1998), 179–214.

[12] H.D. Meijering, *De Willekeuren van de Opstalsboom (1323). Een filologisch-historische monografie* (Groningen, 1974).

identity building were present, such as a shared language, a shared history and (elements of) a shared political and legal culture. What views, if any, did fifteenth-century inhabitants themselves have of Friesland and the Frisians? By investigating some of the historical texts of this period, we can get closer to an answer.

The mythical discourse: the Gesta*-cycle*

What I have labelled the mythical discourse, the representation of a mythological past, is seen in its most vigorous form in a series of closely related chronicles known as the *Gesta*-cycle. The four versions under discussion here are a Latin text, called the *Historia Frisiae*; a Frisian version, the *Gesta Fresonum*, which was translated into Middle Dutch and called the *Gesta Frisiorum*; and finally a Middle Dutch rhymed version, the *Olde Freesche Cronike*.[13] The relationships between these texts, as well as their contexts of origin, still await closer investigation. In general, however, we can safely assume that most, if not all, versions date from the second half of the fifteenth century and that they were produced in a clerical context in Friesland west of the Lauwers.[14]

All four chronicles share the same basic plot and design, while also showing differences in language, style, content and order of events. These differences indicate that at one time many more versions than we now have must have circulated. Also, they are an indication of the different kinds of audiences at which these chronicles were targeted, ranging from learned readers who had mastered Latin to a Frisian or Dutch-speaking audience. In the fifteenth century, Frisian began to lose ground, as Dutch and Low German texts pushed in from the

[13] Not discussed here are an incomplete version of the *Gesta Fresonum* and a short abstract known as *Klein Oudfries Kroniekje* or *Aldfrysk Kronykje*. Editions: H. Reimers, 'Die Lateinische Vorlage der "Gesta Frisiorum"', *De vrije Fries* 35 (1939), 96–151, at 114–142 (*Historia Frisiae*); *Codex Aysma*, ed. W.J. Buma, P. Gerbenzon and M. Tragter-Schubert (Assen/Maastricht, 1993), 506–555 (*Gesta Fresonum*, with German translation); *Oude Friesche kronijken*, ed. E. Epkema (Leeuwarden, 1853), 211–249 (*Olde Freesche Cronike*) and 283–306 (*Gesta Frisiorum*).

[14] Hans Mol and Justine Smithuis, 'De Friezen als uitverkoren volk. Religieus-patriottische geschiedschrijving in vijftiende-eeuws Friesland', *Jaarboek voor middeleeuwse geschiedenis* 11 (2008), 165–204; see also J. Hoekstra, *Vier Friese kronieken* ('s-Gravenhage, 1948); Bremmer, *Hir is eskriven*, 123–126; Waterbolk, *Twee eeuwen Friese geschiedschrijving*, 245–247.

west and east respectively.[15] This, then, explains the presence of Dutch versions. The absence of Low German versions, on the other hand, seems to indicate that the *Gesta*-tradition was not so popular or possibly unknown, east of the Lauwers.

The *Gesta*-cycle is characterised by a clear vision of Frisian history. In fact, it moulds this history into a Frisian mythology, showing a strong focus on the distant past and origin of the Frisian people. All texts start with the colonisation of the northern coastlands by the three brothers Friso, Saxo and Bruno. They sailed from India and were the ancestors of the Frisians, the Saxons and the people of Brunswick respectively.[16] They divided the lands between themselves and their offspring. Then, the focus shifts entirely to Friso's descendants, the Frisians. Various episodes talk about the servitude of these people under a Danish ruler, how they were liberated from this tyranny by Charlemagne and how they subsequently received the Christian faith from Saint Willibrord and other missionaries.[17] The Danish occupation, which in reality took place after the Frankish conquest, was therefore projected backwards to a period when the Frisians still had indigenous, but heathen rulers. In this way, the Frisians' heathenism could be blamed on an 'evil' outsider.[18] Other episodes tell us about the establishment of bishoprics in the Frisian lands and the miraculous way in which the Frisians had received their laws.

The sources for these early adventures are for a large part to be found in the older Frisian legal tradition, and particularly in the historical and legendary material which some legal texts offer.[19] In these

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[15] Oebele Vries, *'Naar ploeg en koestal vluchtte uw taal'. De verdringing van het Fries als schrijftaal door het Nederlands (tot 1580)* (Leeuwarden, 1993), 1–69; Bremmer, *Hir is eskriven*, 12.

[16] The invention of Bruno may be explained by the Saxon Brunonian house, counts of Brunswick, who ruled over the Frisian territories between Vlie and Weser in the eleventh century.

[17] On the prominent position of Saint Willibrord in the Frisian myth of origin, or in the 'Matter of Friesland' as Bremmer has labelled it: Rolf H. Bremmer Jr., 'Willibrord through Anglo-Saxon and Frisian eyes. From history to myth', in *Friesische Studien I*, ed. V.F. Faltings, A.G.H. Walker and U. Wilts, NOWELE Supplement 8 (Odense, 1992), 1–28.

[18] See also *Thet Freske Riim, Tractatus Alvini*, ed. Alastair Campbell (The Hague, 1952), 11.

[19] For a partly outdated, but still useful discussion of the development and intertwining of legal and historiographical traditions concerning Frisian freedom since the thirteenth century see *Thet Freske Riim*, 10–19 (at 18–19 on the *Olde Freesche Cronike*). Other discussions of sources used in the *Gesta*-cycle surprisingly ignore the

legends, the role of Charlemagne as the founder of Frisian freedom and law is prominent. One important source used in the *Gesta*-cycle is the spurious Privilege of Charlemagne, which tells how Charlemagne granted the Frisians their freedom on account of their military support against rebellions of the Saxons and the Romans. This false privilege was probably conceived around 1300 in order to secure the claim to Frisian autonomy against external threats, and it soon became very popular.[20] The thirteenth-century Statutes of Magnus are another source. According to these statutes, Magnus led the Frisians to their freedom and a confirmation of their laws by helping Charlemagne and the pope in Rome. The legend and fame of Magnus as the standard-bearer of the Frisians spread from the thirteenth century onwards, as is shown for example by his appearance on land seals.[21]

Four episodes in the *Gesta*-cycle focus on later times, relating the Frisians' participation in the crusades. These episodes, which were apparently new in Frisian historiography, are told partly from the point of view of individual Frisian heroes, some of whom are credited with sainthood on account of their martyrdom. Their sources are partly obscure.[22] Chronologically, the *Gesta*-cycle ends in the year 1248 with the siege of Aachen, when the Frisians received another privilege concerning their freedom from the Holy Roman king. A large part of the narrative, however, concentrates on the period of the seventh to ninth centuries. As we have seen this was the period when Friesland was still 'united'.

When considering the names of, and qualifications attributed to, the Frisian territory and people in the *Gesta*-cycle, one of the most striking facets of the tradition comes to the fore: the comparison of the history of the Frisian people with that of the people of Israel. Each

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major influence of the Frisian legal tradition: H. Bruch, *Supplement bij de Geschiedenis van de Noord-Nederlandsche geschiedschrijving in de middeleeuwen van Dr. Jan Romein* (Haarlem, 1956), 56–58; Reimers, 'Die Lateinische Vorlage', 108–111.

[20] In the *Historia Frisiae* this privilege is even integrally inserted. Further reading: A. Janse, 'De waarheid van een falsum. Op zoek naar de politieke context van het Karelsprivilege', *De vrije Fries* 71 (1991), 7–28; W. Ehbrecht, 'Vorstellungen friesischer Freiheit im späteren Mittelalter. Bemerkungen zum Pseudo-Carolinum (MGH D Karol I Nr. 269)', in *Tota Frisia in Teilansichten. Hajo van Lengen zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. H. Schmidt, W. Schwarz and M. Tielke (Aurich, 2005), 199–222.

[21] P.N. Noomen, 'St. Magnus van Hollum en Celdui van Esens. Bijdrage tot de chronologie van de Magnustraditie', *De vrije Fries* 69 (1989), 7–32.

[22] J.J. van Moolenbroek, 'Het verhaal van een kruisverschijning in de laatmiddeleeuwse *Gesta Fresonum* en *Gesta Frisiorum*', *De vrije Fries* 67 (1987), 41–52.

episode in Frisian history is juxtaposed with a relevant Old Testament parallel, along the lines of 'Just like the children of Israel…, likewise the Frisians…'. While the Latin *Historia Frisiae* has integrated these biblical comparisons in all episodes, the *Gesta Fresonum* and *Gesta Frisiorum* are less consistent and add the comparisons to eight out of thirteen episodes. The adaptor of the rhymed *Olde Freesche Cronike* has left them out completely.

The implication of the biblical comparison is that the Frisian people and land were chosen by God, just as the Israelites had been. The prologue (which is absent in the *Olde Freesche Cronike*) makes this aim quite explicit:

> In the Old Testament God has often shown in his figures and miracles his great mercy to the children of Israel…Likewise He has shown great miracles to our Frisian people, when they were in the vast sea called *Oceanum*, where *Indyen* is situated, as can be read in the histories.[23]

In the subsequent episodes, this biblical comparison is further developed. Thus the author compares the servitude of the Frisians under the Danish king with that of the Israelites in Egypt, making Willibrord into the Frisian Moses and Boniface his successor Joshua. Charlemagne is compared to King David, defeating Goliath (i.e. the Danish king). The self-denying deeds of the Maccabeans serve as a proper example for two of the Frisians' crusading adventures, while the Frisian hero Lambertus of Katrijp, who fights the heathen Prussians, is presented as a Samson in disguise. In order to fit his narrative, the author has altered the order of biblical events at will.

Not only the Frisian people but also their territory is affected by their election. The division of the Frisian lands between the sons of Friso mirrored the division of the promised land among the tribes of Israel. Although omitting straightforward comparisons, the *Olde Freesche Cronike* implicitly also introduces the theme of election: 'In the end God gave that they arrived in a land…This land, which was wasteland before, was made very good and elect (*utvercoren*)'.[24] To my knowledge, there is no other medieval chronicle in the Low Countries nor perhaps, even in Europe, in which the comparison with Israel of

[23] Translated from the *Gesta Frisiorum* as edited by Epkema, *Oude Friesche kronijken*, 283–284. Similar versions can be found in the *Historia Frisiae* and *Gesta Fresonum* (see n. 13).

[24] Translated from the edition of Epkema, *Oude Friesche kronijken*, 212.

one's own people and land, is integrated so fully into a narrative as in the Frisian *Gesta*-cycle. Biblical comparisons with the aim of glorifying a people or a dynasty are known to have been used in other parts of medieval Europe, notably in France and on the British Isles.[25] But the intensity with which the comparison is made in the *Gesta*-cycle can perhaps be best likened to a later phenomenon, notably in the late sixteenth-century Dutch Republic. Philip Gorski argues that the early modern Netherlands developed a form of 'Hebraic nationalism'.[26] It might go too far to think of the Frisian example as a form of 'nationalism', especially since we are not sure about the reception of the *Gesta*-cycle within the Frisian community.[27] All the same, the Hebraic connotation is clear. It is a striking instance of awareness of the origin and destiny of one's people and country.

To which people and to what territory did this chosen Friesland refer? For the territory, the *Gesta*-cycle uses the concept of the 'Seven Sealands'. They reputedly came into being when the seven sons of Friso divided the lands. Most versions describe the boundaries of the Seven Sealands in detail. They follow the major late medieval political and geographical boundaries of the Frisian lands from west of the Vlie up to the Weser.[28] The origin of the name 'Seven Sealands' is obscure, but in any event, the concept became quite popular from the fifteenth century onwards.[29] Although it implies a division of the Frisian ter-

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[25] Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen peoples* (Oxford, 2003).

[26] Philip S. Gorski, 'The Mosaic moment. An early modernist critique of modernist theories of nationalism', *American journal of sociology* 105 (2000), 1428–1468.

[27] The influence of the concept of a chosen Frisian land and people outside the *Gesta*-tradition can perhaps be traced in a probably fifteenth-century insertion in the abbot's life *Vita Sibrandi*, in which the Frisians are described as 'Israel': *Vitae Abbatum Orti Sancte Marie. Vijf abtenlevens van het klooster Mariëngaarde in Friesland*, ed. H.Th.M. Lambooij and J.A. Mol (Hilversum, 2001), 384–385.

[28] Debatable in the description of the Seven Sealands are the inclusion of West-Friesland as the first sealand, and that of Drenthe as part of the fourth, as these regions were in the late Middle Ages generally no longer considered Frisian. West-Friesland (Friesland west of the Vlie) had been conquered by the count of Holland at the end of the thirteenth century, while the region of Drenthe, lying south of the Frisian lands, had since long been part of the worldly territory of the bishop of Utrecht. On the Frisian status of West-Friesland see Blok, 'Holland und Westfriesland'; Peter Hoppenbrouwers, 'Rebels with a cause. The peasant movements of northern Holland in the later Middle Ages', in *Showing status. Representations of social positions in the late Middle Ages*, ed. W. Blockmans and A. Janse (Turnhout, 1999), 445–488.

[29] H.D. Meijering, 'De zeven zeelanden—Het Traktaat en de traditie', in *Studia Frisica. In memoriam prof. dr. K. Fokkema (1898–1967). Scripta*, ed. H.D. Meijering, H.T.J. Miedema and Y. Poortinga (Groningen, 1969), 100–111; P. Sipma, 'De Saun

ritory into seven parts, nevertheless it also united these entities into one great image or idea. The early missionary activities among the Frisians and the establishment of bishoprics are a further illustration of this unitary concept. The author's description of these events covers the whole territory of the Seven Sealands, which meant that he had to include the origins of as many as three dioceses: Utrecht, Münster and Bremen. According to the *Gesta*-cycle, the Frisian people, then, were all the descendants of Friso, or alternately, all the inhabitants of the Seven Sealands.[30]

One of the basic qualifications of the Frisians in the *Gesta*-cycle was that of having been chosen by God. The *Gesta*-tradition emphasises the Christian character of the Frisian people in other ways too. All versions start by telling how, before sailing from India to Europe, the brothers Friso, Saxo and Bruno were converted by Saint Thomas in the first century AD. Later, when the Frisians relapsed into heathenism, they were forced to do so by the evil Danish king who also reduced them to slaves. Ever after their liberation by both the Frankish king and by the missionaries, the Frisians remained faithful Christians, as exemplified by their crusading zeal.

The *Gesta*-cycle thus emphasises that the acquisition of political freedom and Christianity went hand in hand, and were inseparable. This connection was again rooted in legal traditions, in which Charlemagne and the Roman pope were both seen as givers of freedom to the Frisians. The self-image of the Frisians as faithful Christians also served a further purpose, that of legitimising and defending the Frisians' freedom of feudal lordship against challenges and threats from others. In the fifteenth century, especially in Friesland west of the Lauwers, this freedom was increasingly threatened by the successive rulers of Holland, Burgundy and Habsburg. This context may partly

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Fryske Sélannen', in *De twadde jiergearkomste fen de Fryske Akademy*, ed. P. Sipma, J.M.N. Kapteyn and J.H. Brouwer (Assen, 1940), 22–54.

[30] Nevertheless the author's geographical perspective is that of Friesland west of the Lauwers, as is shown for instance by his interest in the history of the bishops of Utrecht, which covered Friesland, west of the Lauwers only, and in a slight bias towards heroes from this region. This is one of the indications that the *Gesta*-tradition originated in this part of the Frisian lands (compare n. 14). Still, it is clear that the author uses the words 'Frisia', 'Frisians' and 'Seven Sealands' predominantly and with the aim to cover the whole area of the late medieval Frisian lands, and that his main interest is to explain the origins and history of the Frisian people in all of these lands, which is my main point here.

explain why the *Gesta*-tradition with its legitimising discourse was invented right there.[31]

Does the *Gesta*-cycle show any signs of emotional attachment to the Frisian land and people? I have tried to assess such an attitude by examining the use of the words 'we' or 'us'. In most *Gesta*-versions, these words are used in a few specific contexts.[32] In the prologue, we encounter the phrase 'our Frisian people', in a comparison with the 'children of Israel'. We also find mention being made of 'our forefathers', 'our Frisian forefathers' and 'we Frisians', especially when the colonisation of the Frisian lands and the early adventures of the Frisian people are narrated. In other episodes, such as those on the crusades, the Frisians are referred to in the third person. The *Gesta Fresonum* and *Gesta Frisiorum* also feature two instances where the word 'us' is applied locally. The former phrase is 'us East Frisians', in reference to the territory east of the Lauwers. It is difficult to explain this, when considering that the other phrase, 'our monastery at Claercamp', refers to a monastery in Friesland west of the Lauwers. In any event, this latter phrase gives a good indication of the place where the scribe or adapter worked.

On the whole, we are allowed to conclude that the *Gesta*-cycle shows substantive emotional attachment to the Frisian people, particularly in connection with their founders and earliest history. Their territory is defined by the concept of the Seven Sealands, which mainly follows the boundaries of the late medieval Frisian lands. They are characterised by being elect, Christian and free. This image of Friesland and the Frisians is based on a well-developed, mythical and biblical vision of Frisian history.

The contemporary discourse: the Sneek tradition

When turning to the other end of the historiographical spectrum, the contemporary discourse, we find two closely related fifteenth-century texts, the *Sneker Kroniekje* (Dutch) and the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge*

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[31] See also P.N. Noomen, 'Suffridus Petrus en de Friese identiteit', *It beaken* 56 (1994), 146–187, at 147, 165 and 170–171; Bremmer, 'Willibrord', 17.

[32] The *Olde Freesche Cronike* lacks any mention of 'we' or 'us'. The versions showing these words most often are the *Gesta Fresonum* and *Gesta Frisiorum*. The *Historia Frisiae* uses the words in the same, but not in all of the instances of both *Gesta's*.

(Frisian/Dutch). These two rather short chronicles may have been based on a more extensive chronicle which is now lost.[33] The differences between the descendants once again indicate that more versions must have been circulating than we now have. Their compilation is usually associated with Thabor Monastery near Sneek, a Windesheim foundation of Canons Regular situated in Friesland west of the Lauwers.[34] This location is based on the fact that the well-known sixteenth-century chroniclers Worp and Peter of Thabor, who were both attached to this monastery, used the Sneek tradition for their works.[35] Also, the *Sneker Kroniekje* especially shows a geographical bias towards the town of Sneek and its surroundings.

The set-up of the Sneek tradition differs much from the *Gesta*-cycle. Both texts are annals, listing political and other events from the year 781 down to 1463 or 1464.[36] About ninety per cent of this, however, concerns events from the fourteenth century onwards, and the narrative becomes more and more elaborate as the years move on. Several long episodes, for example, describe in detail the fifteenth-century factional conflicts between Frisian noble families and towns.

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[33] Editions and introductions: Bruch, *Kroniek der Friese kronieken*, 41–51 (*Sneker Kroniekje*); *Kleine Oudfriese kronieken*, ed. P. Gerbenzon (Groningen, 1965), 8–17, 44–67 and 81–83 (*Vriesche Aenteyckeninge*); *Westerlauwerssches Recht I. Jus Municipale Frisonum*, ed. W.J. Buma, W. Ebel and M. Tragter-Schubert, 2 vols. (Göttingen, 1977), II, 566–589 (*Vriesche Aenteyckeninge*, edition with German translation). Of the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge* only the most extended version, in the manuscript *Jus*, is used for my discussion. A shorter version (running to 1421), edited by P. Winsemius in the seventeenth century, probably represents the oldest variant (compare *Kleine Oudfriese kronieken*, 9–14).

[34] Steensma, *Het klooster Thabor*, 11–62 (on Thabor in general) and 92–93 (on the Sneek tradition); Bruch, *Kroniek der Friese kronieken*, 41–42. For a different approach to the authorship of the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge*, distinguishing two or more authors in the surrounding area of Weidum and Sneek: F.A.H. van den Hombergh, 'Nog eens over de Vriesche Aenteyckeninge', *Us wurk* 23 (1974), 109–118. Whether the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge* was produced in Thabor Monastery or not, all agree on a location in the wider area of Sneek; Weidum in fact being situated near Leeuwarden, north of Sneek.

[35] In the work of Peter of Thabor (1460–before 1546), the Sneek tradition fused with the *Coronike van Vrieslant*, another fifteenth-century chronicle, to make up the first part of his *Historie van Vriesland*. The *Coronike van Vrieslant* is a fascinating text for its images of the Frisian land and people, but cannot be discussed here for reasons of space. For editions and introductions, see Bruch, *Kroniek der Friese kronieken*, 23–40 (*Coronike van Vrieslant*); *Historie van Vrieslant, beschreven door Peter Jacobsz. van Thabor*, ed. R. Steensma (Leeuwarden, 1973).

[36] The *Sneker Kroniekje* runs from 781–1464, the *Jus*-version of the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge* from 781–1463 (the oldest version of the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge* probably ran until 1421, compare n. 33).

The sources for this tradition are mostly obscure. For some of the events, the author may have used a Dutch version of the *Chronographia* of Holland and Utrecht by Johannes de Beke, a chronicle which was widely known at that time.[37] For more recent events, the annalist probably used information from his own experience or from hearsay. In contrast to the *Gesta*-cycle, no use whatsoever is made of the rich Frisian legal tradition and its historical legends, nor of figures such as Charlemagne and Magnus. The interest shown for early Frisian history is minimal: after briefly mentioning the conversion of the Frisians, traditionally placed in the year 781, the annals move on straightway to the thirteenth century.

The same goes for the concept of Frisian freedom. The one exception is a casual but nonetheless revealing remark about a town fire in Sneek in 1457. In this fire, according to the writer of the *Sneker Kroniekje*, 'the charter of King Charles, which he had given to the Frisians concerning their freedom, was destroyed.'[38] Fortunately, according to the annals, some copies were preserved, which the emperor's notary had written himself. This remark gives a clear indication of the importance attached to this document, but it is left unmentioned in the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge*. All in all, the almost exclusive focus on contemporary (political) history, without any regard for the legendary traditions, explains why I have labelled this tradition 'contemporary'.

The differences between the 'mythical' and 'contemporary' traditions are further revealed when comparing the use of names for the Frisian territory and people. To this end, I have analysed the geographical names used in both traditions.[39] As we have seen, the *Gesta*-cycle focusses on the territory of the Seven Sealands, and the use of the name 'Friesland' is omnipresent. The Sneek annals, on the contrary, may treat Frisian history, but they also report events from neighbouring or more distant territories.[40] Furthermore, the annals do

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[37] Bruch, *Kroniek der Friese kronieken*, 42; H. Bruch, 'Johannes de Beke en Friesland', *It beaken* 46 (1984), 238–250.

[38] Translated from the edition of Bruch, *Kroniek der Friese kronieken*, 49.

[39] I would like to thank P.N. Noomen of the Fryske Akademy (Leeuwarden) for his assistance in locating some of the Frisian geographical names.

[40] In percentage terms, roughly speaking, in the *Sneker Kroniekje* about 50 per cent of the items deal with Frisian events, 10 with Holland-Frisian relations (mainly relevant to Friesland, west of the Lauwers), 25 with other Low Countries territories (mostly Holland and Utrecht) and 5 with the Hundred Year's War, while 10 is of a more general or religious nature. For the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge*, the percentages are comparable.

not mention Friesland or Frisians very often, while the notion of the Seven Sealands is completely absent. Moreover, whenever the name of Friesland occurs, the territory referred to is hard to define. Its meaning often seems to be limited to that of Friesland west of the Lauwers, but the annalist never makes this clear. In the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge*, for instance, there are several mentions of 'all over Friesland' (*wr al Fresland* and variants) in relation to plagues, floods or other disasters. Who knows what territory precisely the writer had in mind? Finally, the use of the names of Friesland and Frisians pales into insignificance in comparison with the names of all kinds of localities.

Table 1.1 The use of Frisian geographical names in the Sneek tradition[41]

	Sneker Kroniekje	*Vriesche Aenteyckeninge*
Items containing names of localities or castles in Friesland, west of Lauwers	45 (=69%)	38 (=53%)
Items containing names of localities or castles in other parts of the Frisian lands	8 (=12%)	16 (=22%)
Items containing 'Friesland' or 'Frisians'	9 (=14%)	15 (=21%)
Items containing names of Frisian regions	3 (=5%)	3 (=4%)
TOTAL[42]	65 (=100%)	72 (=100%)

As this table shows, about half to two-thirds of the items with Frisian geographical names mention local names of towns, villages or castles situated in Friesland, west of the Lauwers. The number of such items dealing with local names in the other parts of the Frisian lands is much smaller; besides, the events related often turn out to have implications for the western regions. This is the case, for example, with the items relating the party strife in which the East Frisian nobleman Focko

[41] In this table only the items in which identifiable Frisian geographical names appear, are counted. Because the items are counted, and not the names mentioned within the items, the numbers do *not* indicate the sum total of geographical names used in the text, which is much larger, especially in the case of local names. In some items, different types of names e.g. local, regional are used side by side and are therefore double counted.

[42] The total number of items in each text is higher, as only the items containing Friesian geographical names have been counted here. For the *Sneker Kroniekje* the total number of items is 82, for the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge* according to the *Jus*-version it is 129.

Uckena was involved in the 1410s and 1420s and which spread to Friesland west of the Lauwers. In general, the number of events dealing with other parts of the Frisian lands is comparable or smaller than those dealing with Holland or other territories in the Low Countries. The name of Friesland is mentioned in no more than 15–20 per cent of the items. Interestingly, this table also reveals that the names of Frisian regions or *terrae* are practically absent. The geographical focus in the Sneek tradition is almost completely local.

It will not come as a surprise that there is little visible attachment to the concept of Friesland or the Frisian people. There are no occurrences of 'we' or 'us'. The author, or authors, of the Sneek tradition usually maintain a safe distance between themselves and the subject. Here and there, however, local loyalties are revealed. To cite an example from the *Sneker Kroniekje*: 'In the year 1396 was the battle at Kuinre [against Holland]; there fell about 400 Frisians (*Vriesen*) and nine men from Sneek'.[43]

Conclusion

The *Gesta*-cycle and the Sneek tradition represent two ends of the fifteenth-century Frisian historiographical spectrum in their images of the Frisian territory, people and history. At the one end we find the 'mythical' discourse of the *Gesta*-cycle, characterised by a unitary and clear concept of the Frisian lands and people, which is projected onto a mythical and distant past. In the view of the *Gesta*-cycle, the Frisians of the Seven Sealands are one people bound together by a common ancestor and a common mission to defend the Christian faith and the Frisian freedom. To this end, the historical truth is made subservient to the ideas and concepts found in the Frisian legal tradition and in the Old Testament. This vision was developed with the ultimate aim of legitimising and defending the threatened position of Frisian autonomy at the end of the Middle Ages. The consistency with which this mythical discourse is bolstered by comparisons with the people of Israel is remarkable and should be studied in a broader,

[43] Translated from the edition of Bruch, *Kroniek der Friese kronieken*, 45. The casualties from Sneek are lacking in all versions of the *Vriesche Aenteyckeninge*: compare *Kleine Oudfriese kronieken*, 49.

European context. The 'contemporary' Sneek tradition, on the other hand, disregards the legendary traditions completely, and focusses on the contemporary contingencies in and around the local neighbourhood instead, combining these with generally known historical facts. The Sneek tradition does not try to present a clear vision of what the Frisian territory and people are, were, or should be, but puts the local concerns first.

How can we explain the co-existence of these contrasting discourses? Both images, mythical and contemporary, unitary and local, may be seen as an expression of the varying imagery and levels of solidarity that can be found across a population or within individuals. There clearly was an 'imagined community' of Frisians in the fifteenth century, which was historically defined and covered the coastal territories from the Vlie to the Weser. This is a point worth making in itself. Even in the absence of political unity, there still was a collective Frisian identity which was quite strong. Due to the gaps in our knowledge, however, it remains difficult for us to assess whether the unitary image or the locally based one was the more popular, and whether their audiences were overlapping. Perhaps the greater variation in language and in style, prose or verse that we find in the *Gesta*-cycle points to a wider and more diverse audience for this tradition. On the basis of what we know now, we have to assume that the production and popularity of both traditions was mainly limited to Friesland west of the Lauwers. Further research, combining other types of sources, is desirable for the other parts of the Frisian lands.[44]

Meanwhile, we can explain the flourishing of both traditions, mythical as well as contemporary, by the precarious political situation that Friesland, west of the Lauwers was facing in the course of the fifteenth century. The increasing external threats from Burgundy and Habsburg, in addition to the continuing internal struggles, could spark off a longing for a Frisian people that was united against its common enemies. Yet simultaneously, these challenges also confronted them with everyday problems that made them focus on, and identify with, the local world that was closest to home.

[44] Combining sources such as the production and content of legal texts in Frisian and Low German, or representations on seals, coins and other material sources.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE LATE MEDIEVAL BRABANTINE LEGEND OF BRABON

Sjoerd Bijker

Introduction

> Now you will hear the truth about how Brabant first received its name, and how the first duke with the swan came. But it is all foolishness to believe that the late Elias was a swan and later became a man. Those are things that I can't believe because it is against nature, and one can find it neither in the *Spiegel Historiael* nor in other chronicles.[1]

With these words the Brabantine chronicler Hennen van Merchtenen introduced the legendary history of Silvius Brabon, also known as the 'Knight of the Swan', in his *Cornicke van Brabant* (The chronicle of Brabant) (1415). Although it would take another fifteen years until the duchy became an integral part of the Burgundian territories, Van Merchtenen wrote this chronicle at a time when the duchy of Brabant was ruled for the first time by a duke belonging to the Burgundian house. From 1430 onward Brabant was one of the most renowned principalities of the Burgundian and later the Habsburg Low Countries.

Hennen van Merchtenen was not the only Brabant chronicler to address the Brabon legend. From the thirteenth century onwards we find a long series of references to it, and there are many indications that the legend of Brabon was well received in urban circles in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, particularly in the town of Antwerp, where there were many reminders of the most spectacular episode of

[1] 'Nu seldi hoeren den rechten sen / Hoe Brabant erst crech sinen name, / Ende hoe d'ierste hertoghe metten swane / Quam. Maer het's al gheduas, / Die meijnen dat wilen Elijas / Eene swane was ende daer nae man. / Het's dingen die ic niet en can / Gheloven: het's segen nature; / Ende oec vint men't te gender ueren / In *Spiegel* noch in cronike.' Hennen van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant (1414)*, ed. G. Gezelle (Ghent, 1896), 30 (vs. 165–174). Hennen van Merchtenen points to the *Spiegel historiael*, which was written between 1283 and 1288 by the Flemish religious cleric Jacob van Maerlant: http://www.narrative-sources.be (ID J007).

the Legend—Brabon's fight with and victory over a huge giant. It was commemorated in the names of houses, depicted on the city pump, and even on the town's formal heraldic coat of arms.[2] Most telling is that, when in c. 1500 the huge bones of a whale were unearthed at a building site, everyone was convinced that these were the giant's, and for nearly fifty years, this conclusion remained uncontested.

As we have seen in the introduction to this volume, students of identity have recently become very interested in *Vergangenheitsgeschichte*. Once deemed uninteresting because of its fabrications and mythical traits, texts in this genre are now seen as good evidence for the way in which shared identities could be created by inventing a common and often glorious past for the community. In this paper I will look at two main questions. What function did the legend of Brabon have for the chroniclers and for their public? And to what extent did the legend help to create a Brabantine identity? I will argue that the legend of Brabon owed its attractions to the fact that it linked three central historical themes: the origins of the dynasty, the dynastic succession and the territorial continuity. This message was as interesting to urbanites as it was to their rulers. It is striking that in the Netherlands relatively few town chronicles were written—that is chronicles that focussed more or less exclusively on the history of one town. Most Brabantine chronicles were preoccupied with the history of the ducal dynasty and of the Brabantine territory. Nevertheless, as Robert Stein had argued, from the beginning of the fourteenth century, the writing of historical texts increasingly became an urban affair. Both authors and their patrons commonly had an urban background.[3] Whereas it is tempting to see a focus on urban identity as a sign that 'national' identity was weak, in Brabant it was actually in an urban environment that we find a growing interest in the history of the principality.

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[2] *Die alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant* (Antwerp, 1498), f. B1r–B1v; I. Schoups, *Brabo en de reus. Het ware verhaal in woord en beeld* (Zwolle, 2002), 44–45; F. Prims, *Antwerpen door de eeuwen heen* (Antwerp, 1974), 109, fig. 43.

[3] R. Stein, 'Selbstverständnis oder Identität? Städtische Geschichtsschreibung als Quelle für die Identitätsforschung', in *Memoria, communitas, civitas. Mémoria et conscience urbaines en Occident à la fin du Moyen Âge*, ed. H. Brand, P. Monnet and M. Staub, Beihefte der Francia 55 (Sigmaringen, 2003), 181–202, at 199.

The legend of Brabon and its tradition

The legend of Brabon has come to us in two different versions, both of which were included in much larger historiographical texts. Our most important source is the *Cornicke van Brabant* by Hennen van Merchtenen. He wrote this chronicle in 1415 in order to demonstrate his skills and solicit the patronage of its dedicatee, Duke Antoine of Brabant. He aimed to write another, longer, chronicle on the history of the principality and he hoped the ducal court could provide him with the financial support needed to achieve this aim.[4] His hope was not fulfilled, however: eight months after he finished the chronicle, Duke Antoine was killed on the field of Agincourt.

With his *Cornicke,* Van Merchtenen had a dual purpose: he could bring out the impressive history of the duchy of Brabant as well as the noble lives of the Brabantine sovereigns, and invoke these as an example to the prince.[5] The chronicle describes the history of the Brabantine territory and its sovereigns, beginning with the coming of the legendary knight Brabon and ending with Antoine's second marriage to Elizabeth of Görlitz in 1409. This part is followed by a eulogy on Brabant in the form of an acrostic on the name 'BRABANCIA' in praise of the 'noble orchard of Brabant'.[6] While the *Cornicke* came into being in a courtly environment, the second source for the legend emerged in an urban setting. In 1498 *Die alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant*, was the first Brabantine chronicle to be printed by the Antwerp printer Roland van den Dorpe, who had probably also commissioned it. The book proved to be a great success and it was reprinted three times, in 1512, 1518 and 1530.[7]

Die alder excellenste cronyke starts with a description of the duchy of Brabant, its towns, its abbeys, its noble houses and its inhabitants, followed by a short martyrologium, in which the lives of the Brabantine saints are treated. The main part, however, is formed by a detailed

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[4] Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 159–160 (vs. 4248–4275). W. van Anrooij, 'De literaire ambities van Hennen van Merchtenen', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal- en letterkunde* 109 (1993), 291–314, at 295–297.

[5] Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, (vs. 4334–4361); Van Anrooij, 'De literaire ambities van Hennen van Merchtenen', 301.

[6] Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 146–158 (vs. 3823–4215).

[7] J. Tigelaar, *Brabants historie ontvouwd. Die alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant en het Brabantse geschiedbeeld anno 1500*, Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen 98 (Hilversum, 2006), 153–164. The sources: *ibidem*, 138–139.

genealogical account of the dukes of Brabant, starting in biblical times with Noah, who was after all the progenitor of all people.[8] More than Van Merchtenen, the author of this chronicle wanted to demonstrate the royal lineage of the Brabantine dukes. In *Die alder excellenste cronyke* the history of Brabon is therefore interwoven in the genealogy of the dukes.

Although our main sources date from the fifteenth century, the legend must be at least a century older. The oldest reference to it dates from the early decades of the fourteenth century, as Brabon's adventures are mentioned in the *Genealogie van Godfried met de Baard* which probably dates from about 1320.[9] The legend of Brabon starts with the birth of Emperor Julius Caesar in a place called Zeven Tommen or 'Seven Tombs', near Brussels. He was the son of Swane, who in her turn was the daughter of the emperor of Greece, and sister of Emperor Octavian.[10] The infant Julius Caesar was brought up in Nijmegen, together with his younger sister Swane junior. Years later, Octavian, going in search of his sister, journeyed north accompanied by a noble knight, called Brabon. When this knight was walking beside the river Scheldt he saw a swan. He tried to shoot it but it swam away. Brabon did not give up, and chased the swan until it led him to a castle in Nijmegen where Swane senior, Swane junior and Julius Caesar lived. While on the road, however, Brabon had to settle a score with a large giant by name of Druon. He encountered him at a spot that was called 'Hantwerpen'—literally to 'throw a hand'—where the giant would ask for a hand as a toll from everyone who passed only to throw these hands into the Scheldt. Brabon defeated Druon, hacked off the giant's hand and threw it into the river. Later 'Hantwerpen' became known as 'Antwerpen' or Antwerp.

By way of thanks for this feat, Brabon was given Swane junior in marriage and was appointed as duke of a territory that was named after him: Brabant. The couple married in Leuven or 'Ten Ghelove' as it was called according to Van Merchtenen. The name 'Ten Ghelove'

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[8] Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 26–27 (vs. 48–67); *Die alder excellenste cronyke*, f. A3v.

[9] Antwerp, City Library, nr. B 15828, f. 1r–6r; R. Sleiderink, *De stem van de meester. De hertogen van Brabant en hun rol in het literaire leven (1106–1430)*, Nederlandse literatuur en cultuur in de Middeleeuwen 25 (Amsterdam, 2003), 108–109; Tigelaar, *Brabants historie ontvouwd,* 132–139.

[10] Van Merchtenen's version of the Legend of Brabon can be found between verses 165 and 805 (Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 30–51).

Plate 1: Brabon's fight with the giant at Antwerp as depicted in a later copy of the *Alder excellentse cronyke: Van Brabant die excellente Cronike* (Antwerp, Jan van Doesborch, 1530). Leiden, University library, 1336 D 8.

was not easy to translate. It might mean 'the place where the gods are worshipped', because a temple used to be there, but Van Merchtenen suggested it could also be rendered as 'the place where people swear an oath', as this was also the place where the inhabitants of the duchy paid tribute to Brabon, whilst the new duke for his part promised to protect them from danger. Ten Ghelove, which later became known as *Loven* in Middle Dutch or Leuven, became Brabon's place of residence.

Although Van Merchtenen's legend of Brabon is not exactly credible, it was itself intended as an alternative to another, older, and even less plausible myth. This is evident from the passage I cited at the beginning of this paper: 'But it's all foolery to believe that the late Elias was a swan and after that became a man. Those are things that I can't believe because it is against nature…'. The older legend of 'Helios, the Knight with the Swan' was a kind of fairytale. It involved six royal children who were kidnapped by order of their wicked grandmother, and were changed into swans. They were rescued by the progenitor of the Brabantine dynasty, the knight Elias (or Helios), who came to their rescue in a boat pulled by one of the swans. Hence he became known as the Knight with the Swan. The origins of this story have been traced to the myths surrounding the ancestry of Godfrey of Bouillon, duke of Lower Lotharingia, who was supposedly a descendant from this Elias. Since the dukes of Brabant saw themselves as the legitimate successors of Godfrey of Bouillon and the dukes of Lower Lotharingia, they were thus also associated with this legendary forefather. But as early as in the thirteenth century there was heavy criticism of both myths. The Flemish cleric Jacob van Maerlant (born c. 1230—died after 1293) deemed everybody who wrote about this mythical ancestry a liar, and lamented the fact that the Brabantine dukes used the Knight of the Swan to make themselves appear nobler.[11] In the Brabantine chronicles now extant, the myth of Elias never appears, but it survived as

[11] Jacob van Maerlant, *Jacob van Maerlant's Spiegel historiael met de fragmenten der later toegevoegde gedeelten, bewerkt door Philip Utenbroeke en Lodewijc van Velthem,* ed. M. de Vries and E. Verwijs, 4 vols. (Leiden, 1863–1879), 4th part, 3rd book, chapter 6, vs. 1–11, 30–32; 4th part, 3rd book, chapter 22, vs. 77–89; III, 357, 378). References to a Brabantine Knight of the Swan can be found in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, and in a Middle French text called *Sone de Nansay*, which was written between 1261 and 1267 in the Walloon part of Brabant: *Sone von Nausay*, ed. M. Goldschmidt (Tübingen, 1899), 554. On the origin of the Legend of Elias: Sleiderink, *De stem van de meester*, 37–50, 69–72; *Van Aiol tot de Zwaanridder. Personages uit de middeleeuwse verhaalkunst en hun voortleven in literatuur, theater en beeldende kunst*, ed. W.P. Gerritsen and A.G. van Melle (Nijmegen, 1993), 380–382;

a literary text and continued to be published in print throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[12]

The legend of Brabon was thus meant to serve as an alternative, an answer to the criticism expressed by Maerlant and others about the myth of Elias. Now, there were no more supernatural elements like children changing into swans (although there was of course the giant). Instead, Brabon was embedded in a historical framework and provided with a lineage which linked him to well known historical persons.

Genealogy and history

Although the two versions of the legend of Brabon in Van Merchtenen's *Cornicke van Brabant* and in *Die alder excellenste cronyke* are quite similar, they did not attribute equal weight to it for the history of Brabant. As we will see, this affects its interpretation.

In general, late medieval chroniclers approached history in two ways. There was the dynastic approach, or *devolutio dominorum*, which concentrated on the sovereign's dynasty and tried to trace it back as far as possible. This could help to legitimise the position of the sovereign by proving that some principality had already been in the hands of the same dynasty in a very distant past. Alternatively, chroniclers could decide to focus on the history of the prince's office rather than on his ancestry, an approach which is known as *surrogatio in dominio*; it emphasised that the position of the contemporary sovereign's office originated in a distant and venerable past. One consequence of the use of *surrogatio in dominio* was that the chronicle began to focus more on the history of the principality and its territory as a whole: the office and the territory were linked. Chroniclers who took this approach also tended to write a more territorial type of history, in which the succession of the sovereigns was used as a marker.[13]

E.A. Emplaincourt and J.A. Nelson, 'Le fond lotharingien de la chanson du Chevalier au Cygne', *Le Moyen Âge* 99 (1993), 231–247.

[12] *Een schone ende miraculeuse historie vanden Ridder metter Swane*, ed. G.J. Boekenoogen, Nederlandsche volksboeken 3 (Leiden, 1931), 122–135.

[13] G. Melville, 'Vorfahren und Vorgänger. Spätmittelalterliche Genealogien als dynastische Legitimation zur Herrschaft', in *Die Familie als sozialer und historischer Verband. Untersuchungen zum Spätmittelalter und zur frühen Neuzeit*, ed. P.J. Schuler (Sigmaringen, 1987), 203–309, at 229–254; R. Stein, *Politiek en historiografie. Het*

Both these approaches can be found in the two chronicle versions of the legend of Brabon. As we have seen, Van Merchtenen recounts the arrival of Brabon in Brabant and how he became the first prince of the newly founded duchy. He does not, however, elaborate on the ancestry of Brabon himself. The only thing he had to say about him was that he was a knight.[14] The vagueness of the chronicler about this should probably be explained with reference to the role the legend was meant to play in his chronicle. Van Merchtenen's aim was to explain the history of the duchy, not the history of the ducal dynasty: 'Now will you hear the truth about how Brabant first received its name, and how the first duke with the swan came.' There were also no dynastic ties between Brabon and the dukes: according to Van Merchtenen, Brabon's son Maersiaen died childless. Brabon operates in a dynastic vacuum; in other words, he was not part of the Brabantine *devolutio dominorum*.

Of course, Maersiaen's death was not the end of the duchy of Brabant. Emperor Trajan created the kingdom of Rhineland into which the duchy was incorporated. His son Priamus (who had already become king of Gothland) became its sovereign. This Priamus, a descendant of the Trojan king Priamus, became the forefather of the Brabantine dukes.[15] It was not until the seventh century that the duchy of Brabant was re-established. This time Pippin the Elder became its first duke. When Pippin's daughter Begga married Anchises, a descendant of King Priamus, all lines came together.[16] Thus, as Van Merchtenen stated, the ancestors of the dukes of Brabant descended from Troy and Rome, as well as from Lorraine (via Pippin's father Carloman) and Brabant:

> This Anchises, understand me well, came from Troy and Rome; and his wife Begga came from Lorraine and Brabant. Believe me, these are the four free regions the Brabantine dukes come from.[17]

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ontstaansmilieu van Brabantse kronieken in de eerste helft van de vijftiende eeuw, Miscellanea Neerlandica 10 (Louvain, 1994), 251–252.

[14] Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 35 (vs. 295).

[15] Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 51–52 (vs. 806–830). In earlier Brabantine historiography King Priamus, whom Hennen van Merchtenen believed to be king of Gothland and Rhineland, was seen as the first forefather. For instance: *Genealogiae ducum Brabantiae*, ed. I. Heller, *MGH SS* XXV (Hanover, 1880), 385–413, at 387, 392, 400.

[16] Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 54 (vs. 890–910).

[17] 'Des Ansijs, verstaet myn rede, / Was comen uut Troyen ende uut Roeme; / Ende Begga, syn vrouwe, was comen / Uut Lotrike ende uut Brabant. / Dit syn die .IIII.

Van Merchtenen used the approach of the *surrogatio in dominio* to trace the origin of the duchy of Brabant, but he also used the dynastic approach to enhance the status of the Brabantine dukes by providing them with a Trojan and Roman lineage, and a Brabantine ancestry to link them to the duchy of Brabant. In this way, Van Merchtenen killed two birds with one stone: he legitimised the position of the dukes by tracing their office far back into the Roman era, thus linking them to the duchy in a dynastic way, and he gave them a royal ancestry by showing how they descended from kings and even emperors.

Why did Van Merchtenen disconnect Brabon from the ducal dynasty? There are two possible explanations. On the one hand he could cut the ground from under the feet of those critics who rejected any dynastic connection between a Knight of the Swan (be it Elias or Brabon) and the Brabantine dukes, while on the other hand he could still use the legend to explain the origin of the duchy. More interesting is a second possibility; in this way he created a situation that paralleled contemporary circumstances. As we have seen, Van Merchtenen dedicated this chronicle in 1415 to Duke Antoine of Brabant. This duke was only indirectly related to the former Brabantine dynasty.[18] On the basis of the Brabantine genealogical tradition, and in combination with the legend, Van Merchtenen could show that the succession by a prince who was not directly linked to his predecessor, was not considered an insurmountable problem in Brabant. Thus Van Merchtenen's version of the legend of Brabon underlines Sims-Williams' statement that myths about origins should be regarded as reflections of the period in which they were written down.[19]

The place of the legend of Brabon in *Die alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant* differs from that in Van Merchtenen's chronicle. According to *Die alder exellenste cronyke*, Brabon Silvius, as he is called here, was the son of the lord of Sycambria (a principality situated somewhere in modern Hungary) and descended from Francion, son of Hector of

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syden, als ic vant, / Daer die Brabantsche hertoghen vrije / Ave sijn comen, geloves mije.' Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 55 (vs. 917–923).

[18] Antoine of Burgundy was the great-nephew of duchess Joan of Brabant: his mother was the daughter of Joan's sister. Van Anrooij, 'De literaire ambities van Hennen van Merchtenen', 303.

[19] P.P. Sims-Williams, 'Some functions of origin stories in early medieval Wales', in *History and heroic tale. A symposium*, ed. T. Nyberg *et al.* (Odense, 1985), 97–131, at 119.

Troy.[20] Although his descendants would later become dukes of Brabant, Brabon Silvius himself, however, was not considered to have been the duke of Brabant; he was king of Agrippina and Türingen. Brabon Silvius, therefore, forms part of the *devolutio dominorum* of the ducal house; he is one of the links in the chain connecting the Trojan heroes to the dukes of Brabant. It was not until nearly a dozen generations later that the duchy of Brabant was founded, when another one of Brabon Silvius' descendants, Brabon (without the name 'Silvius'), was appointed duke of a territory, which was called after him: Brabant. So, in contrast to the *Cornicke, Die alder excellentste cronyke* distinguished between Brabon Silvius, the Knight of the Swan, who was the first of the ducal dynasty to arrive in the territory of Brabant, and the first duke and eponym of the duchy.

The incorporation of Brabon into the Brabantine pedigree offered great opportunities to the writer of *Die alder excellenste cronyke*. Now he could link great classical heroes to the dynasty; Julius Caesar and Octavian became part of the ducal ancestry, which so became closely related to the earliest Roman emperors. Brabon Silvius's fate was also closely linked to Julius Caesar's: Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus, two of the men who would murder Julius Caesar were also his murderers.[21]

In this context, it may be of importance that the author of *Die alder excellenste cronyke* also incorporated a whole range of other founding fathers into the 'Brabantine' dynasty. Wandalus of the Vandals, Pollux of the Polish, Rusus of the Russians, Hunus of the Huns, Frixus of the Frisians, Turcus of the Turcs and of course Romulus and Remus were all closely related to the house of Brabant.[22] Thus *Die alder excellenste cronyke* showed that the dynasty had played a key role in world history. In this way it tried to raise the status of duke and his duchy relative to other noble families and principalities.

It is clear that *Die alder excellenste cronyke* used a dynastic approach. Instead of emphasising the *surrogatio in dominio*, like Van Merchtenen's chronicle, it looked for the *devolution dominorum*, the origin and development of the most noble, princely house of Brabant.

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[20] *Die alder excellenste cronyke*, f. A3v–A6r.

[21] *Die alder excellenste cronyke*, f. B2r.

[22] *Die alder excellenste cronyke*, f. A4r–A4v; compare W. van Anrooij, 'Zwaanridder en historiografie bij Hennen van Merchtenen', *Spiegel der letteren* 36 (1994), 279–306, at 295.

It was therefore not its ambition to retrace the history of the ducal office and the duchy itself, as Van Merchtenen had done; it tried instead to strengthen the *stirps regia* by turning Brabon and his descendants into kings.

Marking out the territory

In his famous series of articles on the identities of the peoples of England and Ireland in the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, the late Rees Davies remarked: 'The notion of a homeland, actual or mythical…is a potent feature of the ideology of most peoples, ancient and modern. Defining the boundaries of such a homeland may also serve to define the membership of a people'.[23] With respect to the identification of the Brabantine homeland, the legend of Brabon is revealing.

We have seen that in the chronicles under consideration here, the dynastic and the territorial component are interwoven. The importance of the territory is highlighted by an approach along the lines of the *surrogatio in dominio*, but at the same time the territory itself is marked. The importance of territorial history for a chronicler like Van Merchtenen, is illustrated by the quotation this article began with: 'Now you will hear the truth about how Brabant first received its name.' This is even more important in *Die alder excellenste cronyke*, which starts with a description of the duchy of Brabant: 'You should know that Brabant is divided in four quarters, that are subjected to four capitals…'.[24]

There was however also a historical—or traditional—dimension to the Brabant homeland and that is where the legend of Brabon comes in. The interpretation of territorial development differed in the chronicles under consideration here. According to *Die alder excellenste cronyke* the predecessors of the dukes of Brabant, had also been kings of Thüringen and Agrippina, kings of France and once even emperor. Later their sphere of influence was reduced to the duchy of Lower Lotharingia, only to shrink even more when the male line in the dynasty

[23] R.R. Davies, 'The peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100–1400. II. Names, boundaries and regnal solidarities', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th series 5 (1995), 1–20, at 10. The other articles in the series may be found in 6th series 4 (1994), 1–20; 6 (1996), 1–23; and 7 (1997), 1–24.

[24] *Die alder excellenste cronyke*, f. A4r.

died out. Their status was reduced to that of mere counts, and their principality to the area around Leuven and Brussels. Subsequently they recovered the ducal title and enlarged the territory to encompass the whole duchy of Brabant.

Even during the ebb and flow of history, however, both Van Merchtenen and *Die alder excellenste cronyke* emphasise that there was territorial continuity in the Brabantine heartland, the region of Brussels and Leuven. For the anonymous author of *Die alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant*, the region between the rivers Maas and Scheldt formed the oldest nucleus of the duchy.[25] Van Merchtenen did not describe the boundaries of Brabon's possessions, but he delineated the heartland by a series of myths linked to a place or town. Valenciennes, or Val des Cygnes, was the place where Brabon first saw the swan; in the Nijmegen castle where Julius Caesar, Swane senior and Swane junior used to live and in Leuven, Swane and Silvius Brabon got married.[26] Finally, Van Merchtenen points to the small town of Aarschot, north-east of Leuven, where according to the legend Julius Caesar shot an eagle ('arent' in Middle Dutch). This famous shot marked the moment that the emperors started to bear an eagle on their coats of arms. Having described this event, Van Merchtenen directly addressed the inhabitants of Aarschot:

> See, Aarschot, of which men do know not much more than what is written here, how this place was the root, beginning and foundation from which the noble coat of arms of the Roman Empire came.[27]

There was more to the territory than a heartland, however. When he describes the life of Maersiaen, Brabon's grandson, Van Merchtenen, mentions with pride that Hainault, Picardy and Artois once were also part of the duchy of Brabant:

> I will now proceed with Maersiaen, who was lord of many countries. Because he got hold of Hainault, as you must understand, Artois and Picardy, and he made these all subject to Brabant. The reason for this was that, when Julius Caesar made the duchy of Brabant, it was the first. And all the other countries did not exist. So he gave Brabant the highest

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[25] *Die alderexcellenste cronyke*, f. D1v.

[26] Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 46 (vs. 637–660); 47–48 (vs. 695–711).

[27] 'Merct, Aerscot, daer men soe letter af / Wet te spreken, dan hier omtrent, / Hoe wortel, beghinsel ende fondement / Was dat edel lustich plin, / Datter dat edel Romsche wapin / Es uut comen ende geresen…'. Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, (vs. 686–690).

> title and gave it sovereign power, with the result that all the land stretching from the sea to the river Waal, was called Brabant.[28]

It was also a Brabantine duke who felled the wood in Flanders that was known as *'t felle woud zonder genaden* or the 'merciless forest'. Van Merchtenen writes that it was only after this event that Flanders received its name, thus emphasising that the neighbouring countries had not only been subject to Brabant, but had in fact once been part of the duchy.[29]

Why was Van Merchtenen so keen on stressing that neighbouring countries had originally been subject to Brabant? When we look at other legends of origin, we can see that these sorts of claims were not uncommon. They could be useful in different situations. Legends of origin were used to stake political claims in other countries. This can be seen best in Britain, where King Edward I actually used the legendary history of Brutus and his three sons to claim superiority over the Scottish throne. In a letter that had been sent to Pope Boniface VIII in May 1301, King Edward claimed that, when Brutus divided Britannia between his three sons, Locrine as the eldest son was not only given the territory of England, but was also the only one to be granted the regal status. As king of the Britons he was higher in rank than his brothers, and after the violent death of Albanact the territory of Albany (i.e. Scotland) was returned to him. With this argument and with other 'historical' examples Edward I tried to force through his claims to the Scottish throne. The evidence was rejected by the Scots, who put forward the Pharaoh's daughter Scota as the predecessor of the Scottish kings. King Edward, in the end, did not await the outcome of the diplomatic negotiations and started a new military campaign against the Scots the same year.[30]

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[28] 'Op Maersiaente stel ic mij voert, / Die heere was van menegen lande; / Want Henegouwe, wilt verstanden, / Aertois ende Picaerdiën / Creech hy al in syn baelgie, / Ende maectet Brabant onderdaen. / Redene waes't, wilt mij verstaen, / Omdat Julius Cesaer / Een hertoghedom maecte, al claer; / Ende d'yerste was dattij maecte mede. / Ende d'ander lande, dat's warede, / En waeren van gheenen naeme. / Soe ghaf hy Brabant al te samen / Den hoechste name, d'overste sen; / Soe dat alle die lande ghemeyn, / Vander see op toter Walen, / Brabant hieten, al te male.' Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 50–51 (vs. 789–805).

[29] Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 50 (vs. 779–788).

[30] Editions of the letter and the report (which probably dates from 1301): *Anglo-Scottish relations, 1174–1328. Some selected documents*, ed. E.L.G. Stones (Oxford, 1970), 192–219, 220–235. On the legend of Scota: E.J. Cowan, 'Myth and identity in early medieval Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review* 63 (1984), 111–145, at

As far as we know, the legend of Brabon was never used to make comparable territorial claims and it is quite likely that it was never really meant to be used like that. Instead it was all about claiming a higher status than the neighbours. When we look to Brabant and Flanders, we can see that legends of origin were used on both sides to prove their status with regard to the other. While Van Merchtenen described how Maersiaen had felled the 'merciless' forest and thus had made Flanders inhabitable, an anonymous late-medieval Flemish chronicler wrote that Boscardus, the son of Liederik, the first forester of Flanders, was responsible for slaying a giant that lived within the territory which later became the duchy of Brabant. According to him, the grateful inhabitants then chose Boscardus as their prince and thus he became the first count of Leuven and Brussels.[31] This was a daring claim, because it allowed the chronicler to argue that the predecessors of the Flemish counts were the first princes of the Brabantine territory. This would have been nearly two centuries before the (historical) predecessors of the Brabantine dukes became counts of Leuven and Brussels. But eventually it was the Brabanters who most effectively used the Flemish legend of the foresters to their own advantage, and to prove that they had a higher status than the Flemish. While preparing for a meeting of the States General in 1510, a conflict arose between the Brabantine and the Flemish representatives about who had the right to enter the meeting first. The Flemish claimed that it was their right because they were the hosts, but the Brabanters put forward their royal history and claimed a higher status. In a letter to the regent Margaret of Savoy, the Brabantine chancellor Jehan van Vorst argued that the Brabantine duchy was much older and its dukes were the descendants of kings and emperors, while the Flemish counts originated from foresters who were appointed by the ancestors of the Brabantine dukes. This argument becomes more poignant when one

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121–123. On the negotiations of Edward I with the Scots: M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (Berkeley, 1988), 492–493. I would like to thank N.H.G.E. Veldhoen for sharing his views on the use of this myth.

[31] This legend is incorporated in the *Flandria Generosa-chronicles* (version C), fourteenth century: A. Kelders, 'Laverend tussen de hof der historie en de warande der literatuur. Kroniekschrijving in het graafschap Vlaanderen', in *Medioneerlandistiek. Een inleiding tot de Middelnederlandse letterkunde*, ed. R. Jansen-Sieben, J. Janssens and F. Willaert, Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen 69 (Hilversum, 2000), 167–177, at 170–172; A. Kelders, 'De geschiedenis van Vlaanderen herzien en aangevuld. Recyclage en tekstuele innovatie in de laatmiddeleeuwse Flandria Generosa-kronieken', *Millennium* 19 (2005), 156–169, at 163–164.

remembers that at the beginning of the sixteenth century both Brabant and Flanders had already been part of a personal union for more than seventy years.[32]

Names are of crucial importance to the development of identities, Rees Davies remarked: 'The names of peoples are in a measure political artefacts; but they are also ultimately, more importantly and irreducibly, manifestations of a sense and conviction of collective solidarity. Names, therefore, are basic to a sense of communal identity.'[33] In the medieval origin legends there were several ways a country could get its name. Most of the toponymical explanations can be classified in two groups. Apart from Brabant, many of the countries claimed that their name derived from the name of the first sovereign. For example, in his *History of the Kings of Britain* Geoffrey of Monmouth derived the names of Britain, England (*Loegria*), Wales (*Kambria*) and Scotland (*Albany*) from their legendary first sovereigns (i.e. Brutus and his three sons Locrinus, Kamber and Albanactus).[34] And although the Scots did not agree that a son of Brutus had given his name to their country, they too pointed to a legendary figure as the eponym. As we have seen, according to their origin legend it was the Pharaoh's daughter Scota that was the first queen to rule the Scottish territory and gave her name to this principality.[35] Another, smaller, group derived its names from certain 'qualities' of the people. These could be positive qualities, as in the case of France, whose people were called Franks because of their pride (although there was also another explanation which pointed to a certain Francio as the eponym).[36] On the other hand there was Holland, that, according to the fifteenth-century *Goudse kroniekje*, got its name 'because its people were so cruel' ('Holland' would have been

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[32] R. Wellens, 'Le droit de préséance dans les assemblées des états généraux des Pays-Bas au XV^{e} siècle', *Standen en landen* 47 (1968), 115–147, at 144; R. Stein, 'Brabant en de Karolingische dynastie. Over het ontstaan van een historiografische traditie', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 110 (1995), 329–351, at 331; R. Stein, 'Nationale identiteiten in de late Middeleeuwen', *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 28 (2002), 222–246, at 230.

[33] Davies, 'The peoples of Britain and Ireland', 7–8.

[34] *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. A. Griscom (Geneva, 1977), 253.

[35] Cowan, 'Myth and identity in early medieval Scotland', 121–122.

[36] Both explanations can be found in the *Grandes chroniques* (thirteenth century): *Les grandes chroniques de France, selon que elles sont conservées en l'église de Saint-Denis en France*, ed. P. Paris, 6 vols. (Paris, 1836–1838), I, 8. *Die alder excellenste cronyke*, f. B4r, has yet another explanation: according to the Brabantine tradition, the Franks were so called because of their liberty.

a corruption of 'hel-land' or 'hell-land' in English).[37] Of course there are exceptions. Guelders was said to, have derived its name from a dragon's memorable last words.[38] Friesland, according to the fifteenth-century *Gesta Fresonum*, was named after an island in the ocean near India, called Frisia or even Benedicta Frisia.[39]

To explain the origin of the name 'Brabant' is therefore one of the main aims of the legend of Brabon. Even so, the different versions of the legend contradict each other to a certain extent. According to Van Merchtenen, Brabon was the noble knight who came in Octavian's retinue. It was Octavian who personally devised the new name:

> Then said the mighty emperor: "Brabon, Brabon, noble knight, I give to you my niece [Swane] and all her land. And I appoint you duke of Brabant, as it shall be named after you for ever".[40]

As we have seen, according to *Die alder excellenste cronyke*, Brabant, was named after another Brabon, the first to be converted and a much later descendant of 'our' Silvius Brabon, whom the British King Maximinian appointed as duke in the fourth century. Here, the reference to the Trojan origins of the Brabant house is made explicitly:

> Maximinian took care of the son of Anchises, christened him and called him Brabon, because the great lords from Troy used to be called Brabon. Maximinian gave him the land he had conquered between the rivers Maas and Scheldt, and after him it was called Brabant.[41]

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[37] For example Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 136d, f. 16r. The same explanation can be found in: *Johan Huyssen van Kattendijke-kroniek. Die historie of die cronicke van Hollant, Zeelant ende van Vrieslant ende van den Stichte van Utrecht*, ed. A. Janse, Rijksgeschiedkundige publicatiën, kleine serie 102 (The Hague, 2005), 183. In fact, the name of Holland is derived from the woods that once covered a large part of the territory: 'Holtlant' or 'Woodland' in English. This interpretation was already written down by the fourteenth-century cleric Johannes de Beka in his *Chronographia* (caput 5): *Chronographia, Johannis de Beke*, ed. H. Bruch, Rijksgeschiedkundige publicatiën, grote serie 143 (The Hague, 1973), 9.

[38] See the thesis by G.A. Noordzij, *Gelre. Dynastie, land en identiteit in de late Middeleeuwen* (Hilversum, 2009), 238.

[39] *Codex Aysma*, ed. W.J. Buma, P. Gerbenzon and M. Tragter-Schubert (Assen/Maastricht, 1993), 508. For more information on this chronicle: http://www.narrative-sources.be (ID NL0496) and Justine Smithuis' paper in the present volume.

[40] 'Doen seide die ryke keiser hoege: / "Breboen, Breboen, ridder vercoren, / Mynder nichten, hoech gheboren, / Soe gevic u, ende al huer lant, / Ende maeck u hertoghe van Brabant, / Saelt nae u heten emmermeere…".' Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke van Brabant*, 45 (vs. 619–624).

[41] 'Ende hem ontfermde des edels kint ende liet kersten doen ende wert Brabon geheeten, om des wille dat de grote heeren uut Troyen geboren voirtijts Brabon hieten. Ende Maximiaen gaf desen jonghen Brabone weder om dlant dat hy genomen hadde

Both toponymic explanations must have had their advantages. With Octavian as the official name-giver Van Merchtenen could accord the duchy more status, while at the same time lending more credibility to this part of the legend. After all, Emperor Octavian was a renowned historical figure. *Die alder excellenste cronyke* stresses the genealogical continuity between Brabon as the first duke and the 'modern' dynasty. With the first duke as the eponym of the country, his successors and descendants were strongly linked to their territory and its people: so it was possible to emphasise the common history of both the successive sovereigns and the territory and thus the important role of the princes in their principality. In this way it legitimised the position of the reigning sovereigns, and probably attempted to raise the affection of the people towards their rulers.

The legend of Brabon could further strengthen the position of the contemporary duke by demonstrating that his most important task as a prince was to maintain order. The legend not only legitimised the duke as a person but also the ducal office. The idea of a prince as the bringer and keeper of order and justice is of course quite common. In Brabant this idea was put into words by the Antwerp cleric Jan van Boendale in his *Lekenspiegel* ('Layman's Mirror'). Discussing the question of why the first sovereigns were appointed, Boendale explained that at first people lived in anarchy, in a lawless and agricultural society without towns. According to Boendale, there were lots of parasites who exploited the hardworking people and who did not hesitate to commit robbery or murder to achieve their goals. At a certain point the people decided enough was enough, and a statute was formulated to bring order. A guardian was appointed to keep justice. He was able to support himself from the new annual taxes that were introduced. Laws were enacted that not only regulated the community of the common people, but that also had to be respected and upheld by the prince, without prejudice. For this reason, as Boendale stated, the introduction of the first sovereigns was for the common good of the people.[42]

In a more graphic way, the pre-governmental chaos could be symbolised by dangerous creatures like giants or dragons. As we have seen, Van Merchtenen writes about the terrible giant Druon who terrorised

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tusschen Mase ende Scelt, ende na hem wert dlant Brabant geheeten.' *Die alder excellenste cronyke*, f. D1v.

[42] Jan van Boendale, *Der leken spieghel. Leerdicht van den jare 1330, door Jan Boendale, gezegd Jan de Clerc*, ed. M. de Vries, 3 vols. (Leiden, 1844–1848), I, 137–140.

travellers by the bank of the River Scheldt. In one of the main late fifteenth-century origin myths of the duchy of Guelders, a dragon that terrorised the local people was killed by two brothers. According to this myth the name of this famous duchy was derived from the words the dragon used to growl: 'Gelre, Gelre!'[43] It is also in this context that we should place the tale about Maersiaen's felling of the perilous 'merciless forest' that occupied the territory of what later became the county of Flanders.[44] By killing the giant and clearing the forest, Silvius Brabon (the Knight of the Swan) and his descendants brought order into their territory.

Such tales were not uncommon. The 'merciless forest' as a symbol of chaos and lawlessness also appears in the origin myths of the county of Flanders and the county of Holland. According to Flemish chronicles this forest occupied a large piece of the Flemish territory and was cleared in the Carolingian period by the first forester of Flanders, the predecessor of the Flemish counts. In Holland, on the other hand, the felling of the Merciless Forest was supposed to have coincided with the conversion of the Hollanders. Just before the arrival of the missionary Willibrord, an earthquake (or an enormous storm) felled all the trees. When the missionary saw the ravaged forest, he proclaimed it was a divine sign that this country was ready to be converted. This direct link, between the coming of Christianity and the devastation of the Merciless Forest, makes it clear that the Forest symbolised not only anarchy but also the pagan world.[45]

Conclusion

In 1549, when Philip II made his *joyeuse entrée* into Antwerp, he was welcomed by a papier-mâché statue of the fearsome giant, whom Brabon had defeated some fifteen hundred years earlier. During the

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[43] A.G. Noordzij, 'Geschiedschrijving en nationale identiteit. Gelre in de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw', *Bijdragen en mededelingen Gelre* 95 (2004), 6–48, at 17–20.

[44] W. Keesman, 'Oorsprongsmythen als zelfuitlegging. Over achtergrond en betekenis van middeleeuwse verhalen rond Trojaanse stedenstichtingen', in *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de Middeleeuwen*, ed. H. Pleij *et al.* (Amsterdam, 1991), 262–279, at 276.

[45] M. Carasso-Kok, 'Het woud zonder genade', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 107 (1992), 241–263; I. Bejzcy, 'Willibrord en de grote boomstorting', *Holland* 24 (1992), 65–77, at 67.

Entry, the giant bowed its head in submission to the new duke, the legitimate successor of Silvius Brabon.[46] By then the legend of Brabon had become the most popular Brabantine origin legend, that played an important role in mass urban spectacles. In the texts describing the legend, the perspective shifted from the dynastic history of the dukes, to a more territorial history of the principality in which the line of the ducal succession kept playing an important role. The legend not only linked the Brabantine dukes to the Brabantine territory, it also made the history of the Brabantine towns part of the duchy's history. The prominent role of the towns must have appealed to the urban public and made them feel that they were a part of the duchy of Brabant.

The legend originated in the times when Brabant was an independent duchy, but it remained popular long after the time it was incorporated into the Burgundian state, illustrating the survival of regional identities in times of political unification. At the same time, the legend legitimised the position of the sovereign in three ways: first by tracing the line of succession as well as the title as far back in time as possible; secondly by linking the dynasty to the principality and by showing the high status of its predecessors; thirdly by explaining the functions sovereigns had, to demonstrate that their rule was for the common good. However, in the legend of Brabon it was not only Silvius Brabon and his dynasty which were at the forefront. The legend, and the chronicles in which it was included, also focussed strongly on the territorial history of the principality. In these chronicles, urban identity was not competing with the Brabantine identity or even with the prince's person; quite the opposite. The ducal succession was used as a stepping-stone for territorial history and the creation of a Brabantine identity.

[46] Cornelius Grapheus, *De seer wonderlijcke, schoone, triumphelijcke incompst van den hoochmogenden Prince Philips, Prince van Spaignen, Caroli des Vijfden, Keysers sone, in de stadt van Antwerpen anno M.CCCCC.XLIX* (Antwerp, 1550), f. L2v. The head of the statue can still be seen at the Museum De Vleeshal in Antwerp.

CHAPTER FIVE

AGAINST BURGUNDY. THE APPEAL OF GERMANY IN THE DUCHY OF GUELDERS

Aart Noordzij

Between Germany, France and Burgundy

In his study entitled *In the shadow of Burgundy. The court of Guelders in the late Middle Ages*, the historian Gerard Nijsten explores the distinctive character of the court-culture in the duchy of Guelders, in the Lower Rhine area between Holland, Utrecht, Brabant and Cologne. Nijsten writes that the main characteristic of Guelders' court-culture was its bridging function. It brought together the cultural areas of France and Burgundy on the one hand and of Germany on the other.[1] Split by the Rhine, the duchy of Guelders was oriented towards the west, as well as towards the east.[2]

Indeed, the influence of France and Burgundy on Guelders is undeniable. Duke Adolph (1465–1471), for instance, was married to Catherine of Bourbon, he was a member of the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece, and in 1477 he died while fighting in the service of Mary of Burgundy.[3] The aversion of his son, Charles of Guelders, to Habsburg was so intense, that he became a true Francophile, presenting

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[1] Gerard Nijsten, *In the shadow of Burgundy. The court of Guelders in the late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2004), 399. See also: Nijsten, 'Hof en cultuur. Karakteristiek van een middelgroot hof aan de Nederrijn', in *Gelre, Geldern, Gelderland. Geschiedenis en cultuur van het hertogdom Gelre*, ed. Johannes Stinner and Karl-Heinz Tekath (Geldern, 2001), 373–382.

[2] In this respect, Guelders is comparable with other territories in the Lower Rhine area, especially with Cleves. For example: Gregor Hövelmann, 'Die Anfänge der Beziehungen zwischen Kleve und den Herzögen von Burgund', *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 161 (1959), 232–243; Henny Grüneisen, 'Die westlichen Reichsstände in der Auseinandersetzung zwischen dem Reich, Burgund und Frankreich bis 1473', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 26 (1961), 22–77; Hans Peter Hilger, 'Kleve und Burgund', in *Land im Mittelpunkt der Mächte. Die Herzogtümer Jülich, Kleve, Berg* (Cleves, 1984), 209–233; Petra Ehm, *Burgund und das Reich. Spätmittelalterliche Aussenpolitik am Beispiel der Regierung Karls des Kühnen (1465–1477)* (Munich, 2002), 27–97; Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good. The apogee of Burgundy* (London 1970), 289–293.

[3] Ehm, *Burgund und das Reich*, 35–36; Richard Vaughan, *Charles the Bold. The last Valois duke of Burgundy* (London 1973), 112–115.

himself as a proud descendant of Charlemagne and the French royal dynasty.[4] At the end of his life he even tried to make the king of France, duke of Guelders.[5] Nevertheless, in this paper I shall argue that the influence of France and Burgundy was only superficial. The cities and knights of Guelders, and most of the dukes, were strongly oriented towards the east: towards the Empire, towards Germany.[6] This orientation involved a fundamental mistrust of Burgundy. 'The Empire' and 'Germany' stood for liberty, freedom and self-determination, while 'Burgundy' and 'France' were associated with oppression and servitude. I shall argue that, to some extent, these ideas can explain the stubborn resistance of Guelders, from the end of the fifteenth century onwards, against integration into the Burgundian Netherlands.

In the first half of this paper, I shall investigate the pejorative meanings of the word 'Burgundy' in Guelders during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the resistance against integration into the Burgundian Netherlands. In the second half, I shall examine the identification with the Empire and Germany during this period. The focus will be mainly on two sources: first, a chronicle of the duchy written by Willem van Berchen in the second half of the fifteenth century;[7] and secondly, a history of Guelders written by Henricus Aquilius about 1560.[8] Both authors, each in a completely different way, connected the history of their own town or duchy with the Empire and Germany.

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[4] Genealogies linking Charles of Guelders with the French dynasty: Gelders Archief (GA), Hertogelijk Archief (HA), nr. 121, 122, 142; GA, HA, Aanwinsten 1948, nr. A.III.5.

[5] On the relations between Charles of Egmond and France: G. Kalsbeek, *De betrekkingen tusschen Frankrijk en Gelre tijdens Karel van Egmond* (Wageningen, 1932).

[6] In the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s several historians have argued that Guelders, and the eastern regions of the Netherlands, Belgium and France in general, used to be 'German', despite their political fate. These historians were inspired by the so-called *Westforschung* (e.g. Franz Petri) or, just by a rejection of a supposedly 'Hollando-centric' Dutch historiographical tradition (e.g. W. Jappe Alberts). This paper however deals not with the question of whether Guelders was, is or should be German, Dutch, Burgundian, or whatever. This paper deals with the appeal of the concepts of the Empire and Germany on Guelders' political elites in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Cf. Ad Knotter, 'Na de *Kulturraumforschung*. Oude en nieuwe concepten in de grensoverschrijdende regionale geschiedenis', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 118 (2005), 227–246.

[7] Willem van Berchen, *De nobili principatu Gelrie et eius origine*, ed. L.A.J.W. Sloet van de Beele (The Hague, 1870); Willem van Berchen, *De Gelderse kroniek van Willem van Berchen*, ed. A.J. de Mooij (Arnhem, 1950).

[8] Henricus Aquilius, *Compendium chronici Geldrici*, ed. J.M. van Winter and W. Jappe Alberts (Groningen, 1955).

Moreover, their writings typify German discourses on identity. First, however, I offer a brief impression of the fortunes of Guelders during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Guelders, 1423–1543

The fifteenth-century history of Guelders is quite complicated.[9] Both with regard to the internal and external politics, coalitions and loyalties shifted time and again. In the 1420s and 1430s, Duke Arnold of Guelders (1423–1465) loyally served Philip the Good of Burgundy, much to the dissatisfaction of his Guelders' subjects. From the year 1440 onwards however, Arnold attempted to free himself from the Burgundian embrace. At the same time, for various reasons, he and the cities and knights of Guelders had become divided. Aiming to keep Guelders within the Burgundian sphere of influence, Philip the Good now put himself forward as the spokesman for the dissatisfied subjects. The advances of Philip were met with mixed feelings, but in the end, the cities and knights kept their distance. Yet Philip also approached Arnold's frustrated son, Adolph, in order to pitch him against his father. Adolph duly started a revolt, which in 1465 led to the imprisonment of Arnold. Finally, after a few years, all the cities and most of the knights accepted the rebellious son Adolph as their new duke.

Nevertheless, Adolph proved to be far less pro-Burgundian than expected. Philip the Good's successor, Charles the Bold, turned over a new leaf, and decided to get rid of him. In 1471 he imprisoned Adolph. Although Adolph declared to Charles 'that he was answerable to no prince in the world other than the emperor': nonetheless, the duke of Burgundy forced him to release his father Arnold.[10] Now, Charles sent the grateful, but dependent Arnold to Guelders in order to resume his

[9] On the following, amongst others: W. Jappe Alberts, *Van heerlijkheid tot landsheerlijkheid* (Assen, 1978); W. Jappe Alberts, *De Staten van Gelre en Zutphen*, 2 vols. (Groningen, 1950–1956); W. Jappe Alberts, 'De anti-Bourgondische politiek van hertog Arnold van Gelre in de jaren 1452–1456', *Bijdragen en mededelingen Gelre* 50 (1950), 1–22; J.S. van Veen, *De laatste regeeringsjaren van hertog Arnold (1456–1465)* (Arnhem, 1920); Werner Paravicini, 'Kleve, Geldern und Burgund im Sommer 1473', *Francia* 23 (1996), 53–93; *Geschiedenis van Gelderland 1492–1795*, ed. J.J. Poelhekke *et al.* (Zutphen, 1975); J.E.A.L. Struick, *Gelre en Habsburg 1492–1528* (Arnhem, 1960); *Verdrag en Tractaat van Venlo*, ed. F. Keverling Buisman (Hilversum, 1993).

[10] Cited in: Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 115.

position as duke. Yet the cities and knights justly perceived Arnold as a puppet of Burgundy, and they refused to accept him. Instead, they appointed the outspoken anti-Burgundian Count Vincent of Moers as governor in the place of the imprisoned Adolph. Disillusioned, Arnold now pawned the whole duchy to his new, unexpected patron Charles the Bold. A few years later, in 1473, Arnold died. In the meantime, Charles the Bold made preparations to take over the duchy of Guelders. He bought the still existing claims on Guelders from Duke Gerard of Berg, the successor of Adolph of Berg, and he also enticed the emperor to enfeoff him with the duchy. In June 1473 Charles at last led an army to the duchy, together with his ally the duke of Cleves. Within two months, the cities and knights of Guelders were defeated, and compelled to accept Charles as their duke.

After the sudden death of Charles the Bold in 1477, the Burgundian regime in Guelders collapsed. Charles's officials fled, and the cities and knights took over the government. Mary of Burgundy, Charles's daughter and heiress, released Adolph, the imprisoned son of the late Arnold. The cities and knights appointed him as their lawful duke, but unfortunately, Adolph died the same year. His son, Charles of Guelders, was still in Burgundian custody. The cities and knights wanted him to succeed Adolph. Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian of Habsburg, whom she had just married, however, refused to release Charles, because Maximilian wanted to recover Guelders. In order to govern the duchy, and to protect the rights of the young Charles against Maximilian, the cities and knights appointed Charles's aunt Catherine as guardian. For some years, they succeeded in maintaining their independence, but finally, in 1481, the duchy was reconquered by Maximilian of Habsburg.

The Habsburg government in Guelders was weak. Since 1489 the cities and knights of the duchy kept in close touch with Charles, who by now was no longer a prisoner of Maximilian, but of the French king. The king was willing to release Charles in return for a ransom. In 1492 the cities and knights agreed to pay part of the ransom and to release Charles from French captivity, but when he arrived in Guelders, Habsburg control had already crumbled. In 1492, the cities and knights installed Charles as their new duke.

The reign of Duke Charles of Guelders (1492–1538) was an episode of grinding wars between the duchy and the Habsburg heirs of Burgundy: Emperor Maximilian, his son Philip the Fair, and his grandson Emperor Charles V. Although the wars were exhausting,

violent and a disaster for the economy, Duke Charles and his subjects refused to give up the independency of the duchy. After the death of the childless duke in 1538, Emperor Charles V tried to convince the cities and knights to accept him as successor. But the Guelders rejected him, contending that they were afraid of losing their privileges under Habsburg rule. After some deliberation, they chose William of Cleves as the new duke of Guelders. Thus, the Guelders' war continued, but only for a few years. By now Emperor Charles V had decided to settle the conflict once and for all. In the summer of 1543, he invaded Guelders and Jülich with a superior strength of 40,000 soldiers. Resistance was pointless, and so in September 1543 Duke William and the cities and knights decided to submit to Charles V, and to accept him as duke of Guelders. Finally, Guelders had lost its independence. Charles V and his son Philip II integrated the duchy more and more into the Burgundian Netherlands.

Against Burgundy

In the year 1456, Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, moved with his army through Guelders. His destination was the city of Deventer, to the north of the duchy. Philip wanted to punish Deventer, because the town was rebelling against his brother David of Burgundy, Bishop of Utrecht.[11] According to the Burgundian historiographer, Georges Chastellain, the trek through Guelders was a gruesome adventure. The locals were rather hostile towards the Burgundians, because by nature the knights and people of Guelders and Cleves hated those who spoke French. Chastellain writes that they even used to cut the throat of anyone who dressed in a French manner.[12]

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[11] On the siege of Deventer by Philip the Good: S.B.J. Zilverberg, *David van Bourgondië, bisschop van Terwaan en van Utrecht (1427–1496)* (Groningen, 1951), 19–21; F.J. Bakker, 'Het beleg van Deventer in de verscheidenheid der rekeningen', in *Vander rekeninghe*, ed. Dick de Boer and Jan Marsilje (The Hague, 1998), 87–97. From a Guelders' perspective: Alberts, 'Anti-Bourgondische politiek'; Van Veen, *Laatste regeeringsjaren.*

[12] '…car le peuple et les nobles de tout ce pays-là à l'environ Guerles et Clèves de leur nature jamais ne sont favorables volentiers à ceux de la langue françoise et souverainement aux Picars, lesquels entre tous ceux du monde il doubtent et héent.' And: '…le pays de Guelres, pays ennemy…là où les routiers et mauvais garchons du pays se tenoient par grandes multitudes comme brigans, couppoient gorges et destroussoient gens et ne donnoient espargne de mort à nul, là où il trouvoient puissans;

Chastellain must be exaggerating. It is true, however, that in Guelders the word 'Burgundy' had a negative connotation, in contrast with the 'Empire'. While the Empire was associated with notions like privilege, freedom, independence and decentralisation, the word Burgundy was connected with France, and tyranny, political centralisation and the loss of freedom.[13] The word 'Burgundy' was also associated with strange nations from the west, like the French and Picards. Telling is the suspicious comment of the Guelders historian Willem van Berchen on the installation of the Parliament of Mechelen by Charles the Bold in 1473, just before the occupation of Guelders:

> [Charles] instituted a certain supreme court, called a Parliament, after the example of the kings of France, extolling his name and exalting himself over all the emperors, kings and princes who had existed in the Roman Empire since the incarnation of the Lord. This Parliament was an abominable, strange idol, to be worshipped by all the subjects of his countries. He appointed Jean de Besançon as president in his place, together with twelve doctors in both laws from the French nation. This supreme Parliament, in which poor men are shamefully persecuted by godless Picards, permitted no appeal. For example a sworn messenger of the Roman Emperor Frederick, sent there to appeal to Caesar in a certain case, died at Mechelen from the squalor of imprisonment and torture.[14]

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espécialement ceux que trouvoient portans robbes ou pourpoins de la façon françoise.' Georges Chastellain, *Œuvres de Georges Chastellain*, ed. M. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 8 vols. (Brussels, 1863–1866), III, 170–171.

[13] Cf. Paul van Peteghem, 'La "souveraineté" du pays de Gueldre. De l'avènement des Bourguignons au Cercle de Bourgogne (1548)', *Publication du Centre européen d'études bourguignonnes (XIV^e–XVI^e c.)* 24 (1984), 17–31. According to Van Peteghem, with respect to the ideas about the prince, the state and the subjects, the duchy of Burgundy, and the duchy of Guelders were totally different. Burgundy was influenced by French political thought, centred around the idea of the sovereignty of the prince, meaning: 'indépendance vis-à-vis de l'extérieur et position exclusive vis-à-vis de l'intérieur'. According to the political thought in Guelders, on the other hand, the prince was not a sovereign. Like other territories in Germany, sovereignty was divided among the emperor, the duke, the knights, and the towns. The conflict between Guelders and Burgundy was in essence a conflict between two traditions of political thought: one German, the other French.

[14] 'Redeunte igitur Karolo duce (…) se super omnes Imperatores, reges ac principes qui ab incarnacione Domini hucusque in Romano Imperio fuerunt exaltando nomenque suum magnificando, quoddam supremum iudicium Parlamentum dictum ad instar Francorum regum, velud abhominabile inconsuetum ydolum ab universis terrarum suarum subditis colendum, (…) instituit et erexit. Ubi, loco sui, unum presidentem Johannem iudicem de Bisancia ac duodecim in altero iurium doctores Gallicane nacionis (…) ordinavit. (…) Sed ab illo supremo Parlamento, quo pauperes (…) per nephandos Pikardos plurimum gravabantur, (…) minime licebat appelare.

Regarding the conquest of Guelders by Charles the Bold in 1473, Van Berchen writes angrily how the children of the duke of Guelders were taken in exile to Artois, so that they would forget their mother tongue ('ut materne lingue et patrie proprie obliviscerentur'), and how criminal Picards were sent by Burgundy to exploit the people of Guelders.[15]

A contemporary of Van Berchen, a friar from the town of Doesburg also complained about the Burgundians. He speaks of the tyrannical rule of the duke of Burgundy, and criticises the Picards, Frenchmen and Englishmen who governed Guelders on behalf of Burgundy.[16] In response to the death of Charles the Bold in 1477, the friar wrote in his chronicle:

> Then, all those who had subjugated the country of Guelders, and as officials, instituted by this duke, had ruled it, turned their back to flee, all of them to their own country, so that in a few days, indeed, not one of those alien French or Picards could be seen in the country; yet countless of them had occupied the country only to lay it to waste.[17]

The word 'Burgundy' suggested centralisation, loss of independence, and violence. But it also had the connotation of 'French-speaking strangers'.

In a sixteenth-century hymn on a victory of the duke of Guelders against Charles V, the troops of the emperor are referred to as 'Burgundians' and 'Walloons'.[18] That Charles V and 'speaking French' should go together seems strange, since Charles was, of course, a member of the German house of Habsburg, upon which the heritage of Burgundy after 1477 had been devolved. On the other hand, although Charles V was an emperor from the house of Habsburg, in

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Unde quidam Frederici Romanorum Imperatoris iuratus nuncius ibidem directus a quadam causa inibi vertente Cesarem appellans squalore carceris ac aliis propterea Machaline tormentis fuit extinctus.' Van Berchen, *Gelderse kroniek*, 129–130. Cf. Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 187.

[15] Van Berchen, *Gelderse kroniek*, 136–137.

[16] *Necrologie, kroniek en cartularium C.A. van het fraterhuis te Doesburg (1432–1559)*, ed. A.G. Weiler (Leiden, 1974), 47–48.

[17] 'Extunc omnes qui terram Gelrie subegerant et tamquam officiales ab ipso duce constituti eidem prefuerant terga verterunt et fugam capiunt singuli, unusquisque in sua, ita ut in paucissimis diebus nec unus quidem posset videri in terra de istis alienigenis Gallis atque Pickardis, quorum tamen innumeri terram devorando occupaverunt.' *Necrologie, kroniek en cartularium*, 52.

[18] B.H. van't Hooft, *Honderd jaar Geldersche geschiedenis in historieliederen* (Arnhem, 1948), 225.

the Netherlands he consciously presented himself as a Burgundian.[19] Moreover, the Netherlands were also referred to as 'Burgundy' during the Habsburg rule. The inhabitants continued to use Burgundian symbols, and soldiers from the Netherlands used to cry 'Vive Bourgogne'.[20] Thus, in Guelders, Maximilian of Habsburg and his successors were constantly referred to as Burgundians. Perhaps, this made the association between Charles V, Burgundy and France possible, while the use of 'France' in this context did not have a political, but a cultural meaning.

However, to make things more complicated, in the sixteenth century, the main ally of the Guelders' dukes against Habsburg was none other than the king of France. Charles V even accused the duke of conspiring with France against the Empire, in order to make Guelders French. Duke Charles of Guelders refuted this accusation. In 1519, his delegates replied to the German Electors, that not he, but the Habsburg heirs of Burgundy were a threat to the Empire. They had tried to conquer Guelders, to alienate it from the Roman Empire and to add it to Burgundy. If Habsburg could have had its way, it would have estranged Guelders from the Empire, and made it a fief of Burgundy or Brabant.[21]

Nevertheless, the emperor had a point. The towns and knights of Guelders knew that the support of France was crucial in defending their independence, but the alliance between their duke and the king of France was met with suspicion. For example, in 1493 the towns and knights complained about the Walloons in the entourage of Duke Charles. They declared that the presence of the Walloons in the duchy had caused confusion. Duke Charles had to dismiss them.[22] Afterwards, about 1560, the historian Pasquillus Merus Germanus from Zupthen, even furiously condemned the alliance between the duke and the accursed king of France.[23]

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[19] E.g. Graeme Small, 'Of Burgundian dukes, counts, saints and kings (14 C.E.–c. 1500)', in *The ideology of Burgundy. The promotion of national consciousness 1364–1565*, ed. Jonathan Boulton and Jan Veenstra (Leiden, 2006), 151–192.

[20] Alaistair Duke, 'The elusive Netherlands. The question of national identity in the early modern Low Countries on the eve of the Revolt', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 119 (2004), 10–37.

[21] *Gedenkwaardigheden uit de geschiedenis van Gelderland*, ed. I.A. Nijhoff, 6 vols. (Arnhem, 1830–1875), VI, 1 (1862), nr. 958.

[22] *Gedenkwaardigheden*, VI, 2 (1859), nr. 75.

[23] Pasquillus Merus Germanus, *Chronicon seu commentarium quoddam hystoricum* (Deventer, 1562).

Indeed, Charles, who spent his youth in France, was more Francophile than the cities and knights could bear. In 1537 Charles, aging and childless, wanted to settle his succession by making an agreement with the French king, which would make him duke of Guelders after the death of Charles. The towns, Nijmegen at their head, abhorred the whole idea; they would sooner become Turkish, or make an agreement with the devil, they claimed. Strikingly, they labelled the king of France 'a Burgundian'.[24] Burgundy or France—in the eyes of the towns there was no difference.

Duke Charles had to give way to his angry subjects, who chose William, the son of Cleves, as his successor. In 1538, the towns and knights made a treaty with William of Cleves and the defeated Charles, in which they emphasised the connection between Guelders and the Empire. The charter says:

> We, the named princes, have noted with concern that the duchy of Guelders and county of Zutphen belong of old to the Roman Empire, and that lately some have tried to sever this connection. Because of this, the lands and subjects have been exposed to tragic wars and dangers, and brought to great ruin. They should remain within the Holy Empire, to maintain their prosperity, peace, and unity.[25]

A few years later, an apology was written to defend the rights of this new duke of Guelders against Charles V, who still wanted to conquer the duchy. Konrad Heresbach, the author of the apology, states: 'the Burgundians have attacked Duke William, against the laws of the Holy Roman Empire.'[26]

After the submission of Guelders by Charles V in 1543, the opposition against the concept of Burgundy persisted. The towns and

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[24] H.D.J. van Schevichaven, 'Nijmegen en Karel van Egmond', *Bijdragen en mededelingen Gelre* 4 (1901), 41–42, 49–51; GA, Handschriften, nr. 318. A huge database with documents on meetings and conventions of the Guelders knights and towns, made by Michel van Gent from the Institute of Netherlandish History, is available on: http://www.inghist.nl.

[25] 'Dwyll dan wy beide vurbestimpte fursten mit vlyt angemirckt ind bedacht dat dat hertochdom van Gelre ind graffschap Zutphen van alts tho dem Romschen Ryck gehorich ind eyn tyt her van etlicken vurgenomen dovan affthotrecken, derhalvenn die lande ind onderdanen lange jar her in beswerlichen kriegen ind geverlicheiden gestanden ind dadurch in groten verderfflicken schaden gefort and erwassen; darmit sy aver by dem Hiligen Ryck verblyven ind sus in walvart, vreden ind eyndracht verhalden werden mogen…' *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins*, ed. T.J. Lacomblet, 4 vols. (Düsseldorf, 1840–1858), IV, nr. 537.

[26] Konrad Heresbach, *Defensio iuris et legitimae possessionis* (Solingen, 1542).

knights identified with the Empire, which they still associated with independence and freedom, as opposed to Burgundy. During the peace-negotiations with Charles V, the towns and knights demanded that the future stadholder of Guelders should be an indigenous German, 'ind Duittscher nation gebaeren'. Furthermore, they insisted that the inhabitants of the duchy should not be subjected to foreign (read: Burgundian) courts, stressing that they are members of the Roman Empire.[27] Willy-nilly, however, Guelders became part of the Burgundian Netherlands. In 1549, the towns and knights protested against the treaty of Augsburg, because it would cut them off from the Empire. According to this treaty, Guelders would be separated from the so-called Westphalian Circle, and added to the Burgundian Circle. They only signed the treaty after the promise that their relationship with the Empire would remain unbroken.[28]

Even after 1549, the cities and knights of Guelders tried to maintain their ties with the Empire. They claimed, for example, that the religious peace of Augsburg, which had been concluded in the Empire in 1555, should also apply to Guelders. This angered Brussels, which did not want to tolerate heresy in the Burgundian Netherlands. In 1566 the towns and knights united against the alleged plan to introduce the inquisition in the duchy. In a petition, they stated that they belonged to the Empire and complained that the bond between the Empire, and Guelders was becoming looser and looser.[29] During the Dutch Revolt, Guelders united with Holland, Utrecht and other provinces of the Netherlands in the so-called Union of Utrecht (1579). But they ratified it only on condition that Guelders would remain part of the Empire.[30] The Union provided assurance that the knighthood and town of Nijmegen would always remain part of the Holy Roman Empire.[31]

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[27] *Verdrag en Tractaat van Venlo*, 247–275.

[28] Winfried Dotzauer, *Die deutschen Reichskreise (1383–1806)* (Stuttgart, 1998); A. Zijp, *De strijd tusschen de Staten van Gelderland en het Hof, 1543–1566* (Arnhem, 1918), 59, 86.

[29] Maarten Hageman, *Het kwade exempel van Gelre. De stad Nijmegen, de Beeldenstorm en de Raad van Beroerten, 1566–1568* (Nijmegen, 2005), 104, 169–171, 185.

[30] G.A. de Meester, *Geschiedenis van de Staten van Gelderland* (Harderwijk, 1864), 161.

[31] *Handvesten en onuitgegeevene charters behoorende tot de beschrijving en chronijk van Nijmegen*, ed. J. in de Betouw (Nijmegen, 1785), 291–292.

The appeal of the Empire and Germany

As we have seen, the Empire symbolised independence and freedom. At the same time, there was a fundamental mistrust of Burgundy, because it symbolised strangeness, centralisation, dependence, and loss of privileges. The orientation towards the Empire, and the mistrust of Burgundy were two sides of the same coin; moreover, the orientation towards the Empire fed the mistrust of Burgundy, and, conversely, the display of power by Burgundy fed the identification with the Empire.

What discourse underpinned the appeal of, and identification with, the Empire and Germany? How did historiographers imagine the relation between Guelders and the Empire? In the remainder of this contribution I will, first, discuss the fifteenth century chronicle of Guelders by Willem van Berchen, and secondly the sixteenth century work of Henricus Aquilius.

Willem van Berchen was born in Nijmegen, the most important town of the duchy. He was a priest and canon in the church of Nijmegen. About 1465 he completed his chronicle of Guelders, entitled *De nobili principatu Gelrie*, the first major chronicle about the duchy (a second version appeared in approximately 1480).[32] Van Berchen starts his chronicle with the history of his native town Nijmegen, or, as he calls it: the 'insignis urbs imperialis Novimagensis.'[33] Indeed, Nijmegen was an imperial town. In 1230 it had received its privileges from Emperor Frederick II. However, in 1247 the king of the Romans, William II, pawned the town to the count of Guelders; Nijmegen became, de facto, part of Guelders, yet the town never forgot its imperial origins, and neither did Willem van Berchen.[34] He claimed that Julius Caesar, whom he calls 'the first Roman monarch', was the founder of

[32] On Willem van Berchen: P.J. Begheyn, 'Willem van Berchen (1415/20–ca. 1481)', *Numaga* 18 (1971), 224–228; Jan Kuys, 'Onderwijs en wetenschap in laatmiddeleeuws Nijmegen', in *Nijmegen. Geschiedenis van de oudste stad van Nederland. II: Middeleeuwen en Nieuwe Tijd*, ed. Jan Kuys and Hans Bots (Wormer, 2005), 185–200, at 193–200; A. Delahaye, 'De werken van Willem van Berchen', *Bijdragen en mededelingen Gelre 55* (1955–1956), 35–55.

[33] Van Berchen, *De nobili principatu*, 2–18.

[34] On the status of Nijmegen during the late Middle Ages: Bert Thissen, 'Die Pfalz Nimwegen zwischen Reichs- und Territorialgewalt (1247–1371)', in *Territorium und Residenz am Niederrhein*, ed. Klaus Flink and Wilhelm Janssen (Cleves, 1993), 33–66; Jan Kuys, 'Politiek en bestuur', in *Nijmegen. Geschiedenis van de oudste stad*, 226–281.

the fortress of Nijmegen.[35] This historically incorrect claim was not new; it had already been made in the twelfth century. At that time Emperor Frederick Barbarossa was restoring the fortress of Nijmegen and a memorial stone was made on which Caesar is mentioned as the founder of Nijmegen.[36] Willem van Berchen, who was canon of the church in which the memorial stone was set, inserted this inscription in his chronicle.[37] Moreover, according to Van Berchen, Caesar not only founded the fortress of Nijmegen, but also a temple near the fortress. Later, this temple was dedicated to Saint Nicolas by Pope Leo III in the presence of Charlemagne.[38]

With pride, Van Berchen highlights the close connection between Nijmegen and the Empire. According to him, this connection was cherished by Charlemagne and his successors. Charlemagne allegedly repaired the fortress of Nijmegen, Emperor Louis the Pious had agreed some political settlements in it, Emperor Otto III was installed in Nijmegen, Frederick Barbarossa had rebuilt the fortress, and so on. Van Berchen concludes: 'Nijmegen is not bound by feudal ties, because Nijmegen is imperial'.[39] And:

> Yes, our imperial town of Nijmegen excels among all the cities and places in our region, generously endowed with grants and privileges by many Roman kings and emperors, to the advantage and honour of the Empire.[40]

The inhabitants of Nijmegen are therefore called by Van Berchen 'Sacri Imperii fideles'.

The concept of the Empire was linked with the notion of freedom. Van Berchen illustrates this with a curious story about an ancient, imperial deer that used to live in the woods around Nijmegen. The story goes that Count John of Cleves, brother-in-law of Duke Eduard of Guelders, went hunting in these woods. Unfortunately, John of Cleves

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[35] Van Berchen, *De nobili principatu*, 3–4; Van Berchen, *Gelderse kroniek*, 132.

[36] C.T. Kokke, 'Julius Caesar als stichter van Nijmegen. Oorsprong, ideologische betekenis en verspreiding van een mythe', *Numaga* 2 (1955), 98–111.

[37] Van Berchen, *De nobili principatu*, 28.

[38] Van Berchen, *De nobili principatu*, 4.

[39] '…cum nullum feodum et maxime imperiale, cuiusmodi est Novimagense…'. Van Berchen, *De nobili principatu*, 17.

[40] 'Excellit eciam ipsa nostra imperialis Novimagensis civitas (…), plurimorum Romanorum regum et imperatorum (…) gratiis et privilegiis, ad imperii utilitatem et honorem, pretiose decorata, cunctas nostre regionis civitates et loca.' Van Berchen, *De nobili principatu*, 13–14.

shot the imperial deer. It wore a necklace with the following message: 'If you catch me, let me free. Julius has favoured me.'[41] Nijmegen is imperial, Nijmegen is free; the story seems to tell us.

Nijmegen, the hometown of Willem van Berchen was part of the Empire, or, in German: *Reichsunmittelbar*. But what about Guelders and the counts and dukes of Guelders? At the beginning of his chronicle, Van Berchen writes that Guelders is part of Germany. Besides, the subsequent counts and dukes were very German—or imperially minded, according to the author, calling them 'princes of Allemania'. In ancient times, the insignificant lords, or prefects of Guelders would have been elevated into counts by the Roman emperor. According to Van Berchen one of these very early counts, the more or less mythical Count Otto of Guelders was famous in the *curia* of the emperor. Because the counts had always been very loyal to the Empire and the emperor, they were granted the imperial town Nijmegen, according to the author.[42]

This narrative about Caesar, the emperor, and the Empire was not restricted to the work of Van Berchen. A contemporary, a certain Johannes de Speculo wrote a poem about his town Erkelenz, in the south of Guelders. In this poem we read that the land of Erkelenz was made by Julius Caesar, who threw up dykes and reclaimed the land from the sea. He also mentions that Charlemagne had given Erkelenz to the church of Aachen.[43] The author of another chronicle written at the same time claims that, the counts and dukes of Guelders were of imperial descent. The first count of Guelders, it says, was Otto of Nassau, a prince of Allemania, from imperial, Roman blood, and from the blood of Austria and Suabia. The author writes about him:

> The emperor gave this Otto and his offspring the county as a fief of the Roman Empire. Thus, the county of Guelders acquired and received many properties; which together make up a royal and princely land.[44]

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[41] 'Qui me capit, me dimittat; Iulius mihi gratiam fecit.' Van Berchen, *De nobili principatu*, 7.

[42] Van Berchen, *De nobili principatu*, passim.

[43] Stadtarchiv Erkelenz, Handschriften/Autographen, f. 110v–111r.

[44] 'Ende die keyser gaff desen Ott die greefscap van Ghelre hem ende sijn nacomelinghen te houden te leen vanden Roemschen Rijcke. Ende sint so is aen dese greefscap van Ghelre gheworven ende ghecreghen veel perselen van landen. Ende is te samen off ghemaect een coninclijck, vorstelick lant.' *Dat boeck dat men hiet Fasciculus temporum* (Utrecht, 1480), f. 315r.

Yet another chronicle, written c. 1500, writes about the early lords, or prefects of Guelders:

> When the Roman emperors heard about their brave deeds and their glorious achievements in war, they celebrated their name amongst the foreign princes, and made them counts and eventually dukes.[45]

The identification with the Empire in Guelders was founded on two basic ideas. The first was that Nijmegen, by far the most important town of Guelders, was an imperial town. From the thirteenth century onwards, the magistrates of Nijmegen, and, of course, also the emperor, continued to emphasise in charters the imperial character of the town.[46] Moreover, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Nijmegen bore in its coat of arms an emperor, with crown, sceptre and orb, and from the fifteenth century onwards an imperial eagle.[47] And when in the sixteenth century a new city hall was built, the front of the building was decorated with eight sculptures of emperors, including Julius Caesar, Charlemagne and Frederick Barbarossa.[48]

The second idea on which the identification with the Empire was based was the alleged relationship between the dynasty of Guelders and the Empire. We can trace this idea back to the beginning of the fourteenth century. One of the most imperially minded counts in the history of Guelders was Rainald I, who ruled c. 1300. A contemporary French chronicler wrote of him: 'Il tenoit le conté de Guelres pour I. des plus grans d'Alemaingne'.[49] For example, Count Rainald had tried to move the coronation of the king of the Romans to the Guelders town of Hattem. He also insisted that the symbols of the Empire, like the crown and the sceptre, be kept there.[50] His son, Rainald II, claimed that the Guelders dynasty was of royal origin. In 1339, this Rainald II was made a duke by the emperor, on which occasion, the dukes

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[45] 'Audientes praeterea Romani imperatores horum fortia gesta et summam belli gloriam, et nomen eorum apud exteros principes celebre fecerunt et in comites exaltarunt, postea in duces.' *Historia Gelriae*, ed. J.G.C. Joosting (Arnhem, 1902), 5.

[46] *Handvesten en onuitgegeevene charters*, passim.

[47] G.A.P.M. Willemsen, 'De zegels van de stad Nijmegen', in *Het stadhuis van Nijmegen*, ed. G. Lemmens (Nijmegen, 1982), 95–98.

[48] A.G. Schulte, 'Het stadhuis aan de Burchtstraat', in *Het stadhuis van Nijmegen*, 17–84.

[49] *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France. Tome XX*, ed. C.F. Daunou and J. Daunet (Paris, 1840), 655.

[50] Paul Moors, '"Frenetieke activiteit?" De religieus-ideologische politiek van graaf Reinoud I van Gelre, 1288–1318', *Bijdragen en mededelingen Gelre* 91 (2000), 37–77.

of Guelders got the privilege to carry the imperial crown during ceremonial events.[51]

In short, the work of Willem van Berchen was part of an already existing tradition that emphasised the relation between Guelders and the Empire. The second historiographer that I will discuss, Henricus Aquilius, appropriated this tradition, and transformed it into a humanist discourse about the blood-relationship between Guelders and Germany. Aquilius, a humanist from the Guelders town of Arnhem, wrote in about 1560 a history of Guelders, entitled *Compendium chronici Geldrici*.

The author of the *Compendium* did not identify so much with the emperor, or the Empire; instead he identified with the German soil, blood and way of life. He was aware that Guelders was a border region, lying on both sides of the Rhine. This was problematic, because in the minds of Aquilius and other humanists, the Rhine was the age-old border between Germany and Gaul. That is why Aquilius agressively tries to persuade us that, notwithstanding its position on the map, the people of Guelders are and were completely German, warning: 'We will rightly resist the liars who withhold us our German roots and trace them to somewhere else'.[52]

To convince us, Aquilius makes a genealogy of the people of Guelders. On the basis of the so-called Pseudo-Berosus, a popular source among German humanists, and one to which I will return later, Aquilius traces the origins of the Germans back to Noah. According to Pseudo-Berosus and Aquilius, Noah was not only the father of the biblical Sem, Cham and Japheth, but also the adoptive parent of a certain Tuisco. This Tuisco, who settled in Cologne, was the father of all the Germans, who inhabited the vast area between the Rhine and the Don. The sixth son of Tuisco was Gambrius. He was not only the first German king, but also the father of the German people of the Sicambers.

The crucial point in Aquilius' argument is that these Sicambers were the people of Guelders. 'Sicambers and Guelders, it's all the same,'

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[51] W.A. van Spaen, *Oordeelkundige inleiding tot de historie van Gelderland*, 4 vols. (Utrecht, 1801–1805), II, nr. 42; Wilhelm Janssen, 'Die Erhebung des Grafen Rainald II. von Geldern zum Herzog und Reichsfürsten im Jahre 1339', in *Van hertogdom Gelre tot provincie Gelderland*, ed. Frank Keverling Buisman and Olav Moorman van Kappen (Nijmegen, 1990), 1–26.

[52] 'Et merito reprehenduntur fabularum fictores, qui Germanicae stirpis originem nobis invident, et aliunde illam adferunt.' Aquilius, *Compendium*, 14–15.

Aquilius tirelessly repeats. Thus, although the duchy of Guelders was situated partly in Gaul, the blood of the people of Guelders was purely German. The author further asked how it had come about that some of the people of Guelders lived on the wrong side of the Rhine, in Gaul. There is no need to discuss his arguments in detail. His point is clear: although Guelders was situated in Germany as well as in Gaul, the people of Guelders were as German as could be. They were Sicambers, after all.

Aquilius identified with Germany, stating that the ancient Germans were very civilised, more so than the Gauls and perhaps even more than the Italians. For an example, look to the Franks, a German tribe that had, not accidentally, descended from the Sicambers, or Guelders. These Franks had moved into Gaul and transformed it from a barbarian country into a kingdom with laws, schools and courts of law. Moreover, from the Franks, the German people inherited the dignity of the Roman Empire. Aquilius writes:

> We have added this about the Franks, in order to convince the studious reader of the excellence and virtue of the Sicamber people, because these Franks have submitted the Gauls, and subsequently came to Italy and gained the Roman monarchy from the Greeks.[53]

Aquilius' ideas about Germany were shared by other sixteenth-century humanist thinkers in Guelders. For example, a c. 1500 poem entitled *De laudibus Germanorum* by the Guelders' humanist Petrus Montanus argued that the Germans were highly civilised; witness the fact that they invented the stirrup and the art of printing.[54] Another humanist, Gerard Geldenhouwer from Nijmegen, called this Montanus an asset to 'the glory of Guelders and the glory of Germany'.[55] Writing about 1520, Geldenhouwer was also affected by the idea of Germany: 'Our *patria* is our most illustrious Germany'. He, too, boasted that the Germans were the inventors of the canon, the art of printing and the nautical

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[53] 'Haec de Francis adiecimus (…) ut studiosus lector videret populi Sicambriaci praestantiam et virtutem, quod videlicet illi devictis Galliis in Italiam contra Graecos attracti monarchiam Romanam adepti sint.' Aquilius, *Compendium*, 20.

[54] *De laudibus* is printed in: Gerard Geldenhouwer, *Historia Batavica* (Straatsburg, 1530), f. 26r–26v.

[55] 'Vale, decus Gelriae imo Germaniae nostrae.' The letter from Geldenhouwer to Montanus is printed in: J. Prinsen, 'Petrus Montanus', *Bijdragen voor vaderlandsche geschiedenis en oudheidkunde* 4 (1903), 113–147, at 143.

chart.[56] In his major work, the *Historia Batavica* (1530) Geldenhouwer demonstrated that the people of Nijmegen were descendents of the ancient German tribe of the Batavians, and that the dukes of Guelders were Batavian princes.[57]

Let us return to our main authors: Willem van Berchen and Henricus Aquilius. These two authors represent two lines of argument that were familiar in Guelders as well as Germany. To start with, the connection Van Berchen made between his hometown of Nijmegen, the Guelders dynasty and the Empire is characteristic of the way in which a German identity took shape during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. While in France and England, for instance, the idea, or ideology of a common identity spread from a political centre, and was accompanied with the rise of a centralised state, in Germany this was not the case.[58] The identification with Germany or the Empire came from below: from the Electors, aristocrats and towns, who projected their self-image on the Empire, and connected their self-esteem with the dignity of the Empire.[59]

The discourse that accompanied the identification with the Empire was concentrated around four major themes: first the Roman and Carolingian heritage, secondly the translation of the ancient Roman Empire to the German princes, thirdly the competition with Italy and France, and finally the peculiar, decentralised, polycentric constitution of the German Empire, in which the emperor, the electors, the clergy, the aristocracy, and the cities functioned more or less independently. What connected Nijmegen with other German towns was the idea that they all, including the inhabitants of Germany, shared in the dignity of the ancient Roman Empire.[60]

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[56] Gerard Geldenhouwer, *Historische werken*, ed. István Bejczy and Saskia Stegeman (Hilversum, 1998), 35.

[57] Geldenhouwer, *Historische werken*, 50–169.

[58] R.R. Davies, *The first English empire. Power and identities in the British Isles, 1093–1343* (Oxford, 2000); Colette Beaune, *Naissance de la nation France* (Paris, 1985); Bernd Schneidmüller, *Nomen patriae. Die Entstehung Frankreichs in der politisch-geographischen Terminologie (10.–13. Jahrhundert)* (Sigmaringen, 1987); Pierre Monnet, 'La patria médiévale vue d'Allemagne, entre construction impériale et identités régionales', *Le Moyen Âge* 107 (2001), 71–99, at 77–79, 93, 95–98.

[59] Compare the contribution by Robert von Friedeburg in the present volume.

[60] On the German identity in the Middle Ages: Monnet, 'Patria médiévale'; Len E. Scales, 'Monarchy and German identity in the later Middle Ages', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University of Manchester* 83 (2001), 167–201; Peter Moraw, 'Bestehende, fehlende und heranwachsende Voraussetzungen des deutschen Nationalbewusstseins

Aquilius, on the other hand, represents a discourse that is characteristic of sixteenth century German humanism. German humanists, like Conrad Celtis, Johannes von Wimpfeling or Franciscus Irenicus combined their identification with the Empire with new themes. They created a new image that intensified the appeal of Germany. These new themes were, among others: the civility of the Germans, the ancient connection between the people and the soil of Germany, the antiquity of the German people, and the blood-relationship between the Germans. These were the themes that Aquilius appropriated, and applied in his own Guelders' context. Like other German humanists, he focussed on two new, or rediscovered, sources: Tacitus' *Germania*, and the already mentioned Pseudo-Berosus. The *Germania* was used by humanists to emphasise the civility of the Germans, and the idea of the 'Uhreinwohnerschaft' of the Germans: the indigenous character of the German people. The Pseudo-Berosus was a history of the peoples of Europe, written at the end of the fifteenth century, and falsely attributed to the Babylonic priest Berosus, who lived in the fourth century B.C. According to this forgery, the German people descended from Mannus and Tuisco, the grandson and son of Noah, who were already inhabitants of Germany. Aquilius used these sources: he speaks about the German soil, blood and civility, and makes clear that Guelders was an integral part of all this.[61]

Conclusion

In Guelders, Burgundy functioned as a negative symbol, a negative point of orientation. The term was associated with things foreign, political centralisation, France, loss of identity and loss of freedom. The construction of an identity is always connected with defining the self and the other. Thus, Burgundy, with all its pejorative meanings, was

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im späten Mittelalter', in *Ansätze und Diskontinuität deutscher Nationsbildung im Mittelalter*, ed. Joachim Ehlers (Sigmaringen, 1989), 99–120.

[61] On Tacit, Pseudo-Berosus, German humanism and national identity: Caspar Hirschi, *Wettkampf der Nationen. Konstruktionen einer deutschen Ehrgemeinschaft an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 2005); *Nationenbildung. Die Nationalisierung Europas im Diskurs humanistischer Intellectueller. Italien und Deutschland*, ed. Herfried Münkler, Hans Grünberger and Kathrin Mayer (Berlin, 1998); Ronald Donenfeld, *Aureus Libellus. Tacitus' Germania en het Duitse humanisme, 1457–1544* (Utrecht, 1997); Frank L. Borchardt, *German antiquity in renaissance myth* (Baltimore, 1971).

part of a Guelders identity, making it clear what Guelders was not. At the same time, the concept of Burgundy was inextricably bound with the concept of the Empire or Germany, which was used in defining the individual character of Guelders. The Empire was the opposite of Burgundy. It was associated with freedom, independence, privilege and identity. This deep-rooted identification with the Empire is part of the reason why the knights and towns of Guelders resisted the integration of their duchy into the Burgundian Netherlands for so long, even after 1543. This is in sharp contrast to territories like Flanders, Brabant, and Holland. In these principalities the majority of the political elites endorsed, or even embraced, their inclusion into the Burgundian union.

In the minds of people like Van Berchen, Aquilius, and the political elite of the towns, the duchy of Guelders was part of an imagined, loosely but organically composed political and cultural community, called 'the Empire', or 'Germany'. The Guelders dynasty was imperial, the major town Nijmegen was imperial, and finally the whole duchy was an imperial fief. Moreover, according to humanists like Aquilius, the blood and character of the people was German. Thus, Guelders shared in the antiquity and dignity of the Empire, and in the civility, purity and indigenous character of the German people.

These ideas about the development of identity in the Empire are not only revealing with regard to the identity of Guelders and the resistance against integration into the Burgundian Netherlands, but also, more in general, with regard to the construction of a German identity in the late Middle Ages. Van Berchen and Aquilius used the existing reservoir of narratives about Julius Caesar, the ancient Roman Empire, Charlemagne, the translation of the Empire, the opposition between the emperor and the king of France, German blood, German civility, the indigenous character of the German people, and so on. Subsequently, they applied elements of these narratives to Guelders, to show where Guelders belonged. The driving force behind the construction of a German identity was not political centralisation, political unity, cultural unity, nor language. The driving force was the appeal created by the medieval discourses about the dignity of the Empire and by the humanist discourses about the German people. Thus encouraged, locals applied these narratives to their own local and regional context.

CHAPTER SIX

THE HABSBURG THEATRE STATE. COURT, CITY AND THE PERFORMANCE OF IDENTITY IN THE EARLY MODERN SOUTHERN LOW COUNTRIES

Anne-Laure Van Bruaene*

> For who does not know that the provinces of these Netherlands have always derived the greatest advantage from being united with each other? Has this union not been the origin of the old custom they have always observed, of assembling towns and provinces for the meeting of the archers and crossbowmen and bearers of other old-fashioned arms, which they call the *landjuweel*? Why else have the towns and provinces always met for public repasts and plays by order of the authorities unless it were to demonstrate the great unity of these provinces, as Greece showed her unity in the meeting of the Olympic Games?
> (Discourse of Johan Junius de Jonge, rebel governor of Veere, in 1574)[1]

> …in the past, this Art of Rhetoric has always been held in high esteem and has also been held very dear by our princes and dukes. Observing that this Art was useful to the common people, the territorial Lords have honoured various chambers of rhetoric with privileges and other benefices and endowed them richly with various gifts; in particular Charles the Bold and King Philip [the Fair], grandfather of our venerable king, who loved the Art so much that he made propose and compose various questions and awarded as first prize a beautiful golden ring with a costly diamond for the man who could best solve the king's question.
> (Introduction to the edition of the *spelen van zinne* performed at the *landjuweel* in Antwerp in 1561)[2]

* This contribution has greatly benefited from the discussions at the Leiden conference. I would also like to thank Sabine van Sprang and René Vermeir for their assistance and critical remarks.

[1] *Texts concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands*, ed. E.H. Kossmann and A.F. Mellink (Cambridge, 1974), 123.

[2] *Spelen van sinne vol scoone moralisacien, uutleggingen en bediedenissen op alle loeflijcke consten waer inne men claerlijck ghelijck in eenen spieghel, Figuerlijck, Poetelijck ende Retorijckelijck mach aenschouwen hoe nootsakelijck ende dienstelijck die selve consten allen menschen zijn* (Antwerp: Willem Silvius, 1562). The translation is mine.

Identity formation in the Low Countries was a dynamic process that was all but univocal or linear.[3] The basic assumption of this essay is that early modern Netherlandish identities, territorial and 'national' identities especially, were highly political, in the sense that they functioned in particular settings and responded to specific situations. There was nothing natural about them. This does not mean, however, that these identifications were simply imposed from above or that they did not resonate with the sensibilities of ordinary people. Therefore, this essay looks at the politics of identity in action. It examines the role of devotional communication, of ritual and of theatrical performances by rulers and civic elites in the creation and negotiation of identities. It will also try to measure the impact of these public performances (and their commemorations) on the urban population at large.[4]

In recent years, scholars have devoted much attention to civic and dynastic public ritual in the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands, especially Flanders and Brabant. Yet, while the exceptional nature of the close encounters between court and city is generally acknowledged, a long-term perspective is often lacking. A notable exception is Hugo Soly's ground-breaking article on princely entries, published in 1984, in which he presents a seductive chronological framework; he argues that the basic character of the entry ceremonies in the Low Countries developed from communication between city and prince in the fifteenth century, into princely propaganda in the sixteenth century, only to end as mere spectacle in the seventeenth century. Soly assumed that with the shifting power balance between city and prince, dynastic public ritual in general, and the princely entry in particular, gradually lost its political importance. Or, in other words, it evolved from a powerful tool for identity politics into a convenient but empty means to dazzle the subjects.[5]

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[3] Alastair Duke, 'The elusive Netherlands. The question of national identity in the early modern Low Countries on the eve of the Revolt', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 119 (2004), 10–38.

[4] Cf. the ethno symbolist approach in Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism. Theory, ideology, history* (Cambridge, 2001), 57–60. Peter Hoppenbrouwers discusses this approach in the present volume on p. 24.

[5] Hugo Soly, 'Plechtige intochten in de steden van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de overgang van Middeleeuwen naar Nieuwe Tijd. Communicatie, propaganda, spektakel', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 97 (1984), 341–361. This thesis was further developed from an art-history point of view in Stijn Bussels and Bram van Oostveldt, 'De traditie van de tableaux vivants bij de plechtige intochten in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1496–1635)', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 115 (2002), 166–180.

It is unsurprising that in the study of public ritual, the era of 'communication' that is the Burgundian period, has received by far the most attention of historians. Especially in the work of Peter Arnade, the concept of a 'theatre state' (borrowed from Clifford Geertz' work on nineteenth-century Bali)[6] has been applied to the late medieval Low Countries. The notion of a Burgundian theatre state that prioritised the public and dramatised communication with its subjects has been challenged in some minor aspects, but is now generally accepted. Within this framework, not only princely entries, but also other ritualised public events such as dynastic marriage ceremonies and baptisms, *amendes honorables*, religious processions, shooting festivals and rhetorician competitions have been studied, as well as the urban corporations patronised by the court.[7]

In recent years, public ritual in the Habsburg Netherlands has also increasingly become a subject of scholarly attention. There is, however, a small difference in approach. While the Burgundian ritual of the fifteenth century has been scrutinised mainly by social historians, the public court festivals of the sixteenth and seventeenth century are being studied in the first place by art historians. This is, of course, no coincidence. Since the late fifteenth century, public festivals were more and more often recorded in detailed printed descriptions, and visually commemorated in drawings, woodcuts, engravings, paintings and tapestries. At first glance, this can lead to the simple conclusion that public ritual itself indeed lost its direct political importance, and that, the significance of these ephemeral events lay in their subsequent commemoration. Yet, most art historians emphasise that the meaning of Habsburg ritual was locked primarily in its performance. Recent studies

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[6] Clifford Geertz, *Negara. The theatre state in nineteenth-century Bali* (Princeton, 1980).

[7] Walter Prevenier and Wim Blockmans, *De Bourgondische Nederlanden* (Antwerpen, 1983), 223–227; David Nicholas, 'In the pit of the Burgundian theater state. Urban traditions and princely ambitions in Ghent, 1360–1420', in *City and spectacle in medieval Europe*, ed. Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn Reyerson (Minneapolis, 1994), 271–295; Peter Arnade, *Realms of ritual. Burgundian ceremony and civic life in late medieval Ghent* (Ithaca/London, 1996); Andrew Brown, 'Bruges and the Burgundian "theatre-state". Charles the Bold and Our Lady of the Snow', *History* 84 (1999), 573–589; Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La ville des cérémonies. Essai sur la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons* (Turnhout, 2004); Graeme Small, 'When indiciaires meet rederijkers. A contribution to the history of the Burgundian "theatre state"', in *Stad van koopmanschap en vrede. Literatuur in Brugge tussen Middeleeuwen en Rederijkerstijd*, ed. Johan Oosterman (Leuven, 2005), 133–161.

of early modern entry ceremonies and other civic festivals attended by the court show that civic organisers (encouraged by local tax-payers) eagerly grasped these opportunities to communicate their wishes and concerns, albeit in a more classical and humanist fashion than before.[8] It should also be noted that while actual proceedings were always the result of negotiations between city and court, this often was the case, too, with regard to later artistic representations. For example, city magistracies offered their prince illuminated manuscript versions of the descriptions they had sent to the printing press or, in turn, they commanded copies of the paintings the court had ordered in commemoration of the event.[9]

Communication and negotiation between prince and subjects thus remained at the core of public ritual in Flanders and Brabant well into the early modern period.[10] This chimes with recent findings by Karin Van Honacker and René Vermeir, who stress that rulers in the seventeenth-century Southern Low Countries could only affirm their authority by granting privileges to and showering favours on local political elites. These local elites did not hesitate to take advantage of the weakness of the Spanish regime. The political situation was thus not so very different from what it had been in the fifteenth century.[11] What had most notably changed, perhaps, was the character of social and political relations within the city. Patricians and well-to-do

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[8] Mark Meadow, 'Ritual and civic identity in Philip II's 1549 Antwerp "Blijde Incompst"', *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 49 (1998), 37–67; Stijn Bussels, *Van macht en mensenwerk. Retorica als performatieve strategie in de Antwerpse intocht van 1549* (Ghent, unpublished doctoral thesis, 2004–2005); Margit Thøfner, *A common art. Urban ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle, 2007).

[9] Samuel Mareel, 'Jan de Scheereres *Triumphe ghedaen te brugghe ter intreye van caerle*. Teksteditie met inleiding en aantekeningen', *Jaarboek de Fonteine* 55 (2005), 79–143, at 80; Sabine van Sprang, *Entre réalité et fiction: 'Les Festivités du papegai en 1615 à Bruxelles' de Denijs van Alsloot (1568?-1625/26) et de son collaborateur Antoon Sallaert (1594–1650). Analyse et mise en contexte d'une suite de tableaux commandée par les archiducs Albert et Isabelle* (Brussels, unpublished doctoral thesis, 2006); Anne-Laure van Bruaene, 'Spectacle and spin for a spurned prince. Civic strategies in the entry ceremonies of the duke of Anjou in Antwerp, Bruges and Ghent (1582)', *Journal of early modern history* 11 (2007), 263–284, at 279.

[10] On the growing role of the provincial States in political ritual, see Luc Duerloo, 'Verbeelde gewesten. Zelfbeeld en zelfrepresentatie in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden', *De zeventiende eeuw* 16 (2000), 3–13.

[11] Karin van Honacker, 'The archdukes and their subjects. The political culture of the citizens in the Netherlands', in *Albert & Isabella 1598–1621*, ed. Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo (Turnhout, 1998), 241–245; René Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog. Filips IV en de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1629–1648* (Maastricht, 2001), 313–321.

master artisans were distancing themselves much more ostensibly from the larger urban population than they had done in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Urban voluntary corporations tended towards a more exclusive membership and withdrew partly from the public sphere. Yet, this rendered the patronage of these corporations by the court even more desirable to both parties, and the public ritual that accompanied this patronage particularly significant.[12]

Public encounters between court and urban elites thus were a prominent and meaningful feature of the political culture of the Burgundian Netherlands, and they continued to be so in the Habsburg period.[13] It is the central argument of this essay that some Habsburg rulers were even more conscious than their Burgundian predecessors of the need to present themselves in the urban public sphere, and to carefully script their participation in dynastic and civic public ritual. This was especially so in the case of those Habsburg princes who tried to establish their authority after a period of war and division, namely Maximilian of Austria and Philip the Fair in the period around 1500 and the Archdukes Isabella and Albert in the period around 1600. They contributed to the construction of what can be labelled a 'Habsburg theatre state'. This Habsburg theatre state brought courtiers and citizens publicly together in a theatrical dialogue on the subject of dynastic, territorial and local identities. This dialogue was marked, on the one hand, by its strong use of religious imagery, and, on the other hand, and much more so than had been the case in the Burgundian era, by a developed historical consciousness. It was precisely the Burgundian myth of able and devout rulers and of local privileges that served as a point of reference for both parties involved.[14] To demonstrate these

[12] Eddy Stols, 'Aspects de la vie culturelle aux Pays-Bas espagnols à l'époque de Rubens', *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 48–49 (1978–1979), 206–225, at 218–223; Hugo Soly, 'Openbare feesten in Brabantse en Vlaamse steden, 16de–18de eeuw', in *L'initiative publique des communes en Belgique. Fondements historiques (Ancien Régime). 11e Colloque international (Spa, 1–4 sept. 1982)* (Brussels, 1984), 620–624; Alfons Thijs, *Van geuzenstad tot katholiek bolwerk. Antwerpen en de Contrareformatie* (Turnhout, 1990), 161–185; Anne-Laure van Bruaene, 'De contouren van een nieuw cultuurmodel. Rederijkers in Vlaanderen en Brabant in de zeventiende eeuw', *Handelingen der Koninklijke Zuid-Nederlandse maatschappij voor taal- en letterkunde en geschiedenis* 58 (2005), 221–237.

[13] Cf. Thøfner, *A common art*, 323–331.

[14] Cf. Robert Muchembled, 'Koningstrouw', in *België in de 17de eeuw. De Spaanse Nederlanden en het prinsbisdom Luik. Band I: Politiek*, ed. Paul Janssens (Ghent, 2006), 185–193.

points, this essay, first, discusses the creation of a dynastic devotion that was promoted partly through theatrical representation, namely the devotion of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary. Subsequently, it will compare the attitudes of Maximilian of Austria and Philip the Fair on the one hand, and the archdukes on the other, towards the Burgundian civic heritage, in particular the chambers of rhetoric and the shooting guilds. I will emphasise that while the performances and discourses under discussion were clearly a form of sophisticated dynastic propaganda, they also responded to, or were even initiated by, citizens, in particular urban elites who had as much to gain from this theatrical dialogue as their rulers. It was within this dialectic process that identities were created and constantly renegotiated.

In the Christian universe of the Old Regime politics and religion could not be divorced. This had been as true for the Burgundian dukes as for any other European dynasty.[15] It seems, however, that the Habsburg princes were even more aware of the political advantages of devotional communication with their subjects. Following on from his father, Emperor Frederick III, Maximilian of Austria supported the propagation of the highly political devotions of the Rosary and of St George. He had a particular interest in the many saints that were associated with the Habsburg lineage.[16] It is also important to note that Maximilian had a different conception of the purpose of princely devotion or, more generally, of the relation between the court and the outside world, than his Burgundian predecessors. Although he revered Burgundian traditions such as the Order of the Golden Fleece, he chose not to adopt the luscious court life the Burgundians were used to. Instead, Maximilian created what has recently been labelled, with regard to his imperial years, a 'virtual court'. Coronations, marriages, *Reichstage* were celebrated with the utmost splendour and were widely advertised in woodcut and print. The point is that all of Maximilian's projects were aimed

[15] Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La ville des ceremonies*, 215–221.

[16] Simon Laschitzer, 'Die Heiligen aus der Sipp-, Mag- und Schwagerschaft des Kaisers Maximilian I.', *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 4 (1886), 70–288; Walter Winkelbauer, 'Kaiser Maximilian I. und St. Georg', *Mitteilungen des Österreichisches Staatsarchivs* 7 (1954), 523–550; Jan-Dirk Müller, *Gedechtnus. Literatur und Hofgesellschaft um Maximilian I* (Munich, 1982), 80–89; Henri D. Saffrey, 'La fondation de la Confrérie du Rosaire à Cologne en 1475. Histoire et iconographie', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 2001, 143–164, at 143.

at the public sphere.[17] The concept of a 'theatre state' is thus at least as applicable to this as that of a 'virtual court'. This direction was already apparent in Maximilian's Burgundian politics during the regency for his son Philip (1482–1494) and continued under the rule of Philip the Fair (1494–1506) and during Maximilian's regency for his grandson Charles (1506–1515).[18] The Archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598–1621), for their part, are famous as rulers whose intense Catholic piety was meant to signal their ideals of sovereignty, dynastic integrity and Counter-Reformation combativeness. They supported old and new religious orders, contributed to the consolidation of new ecclesiastical structures and favoured the institution and reinstitution of religious confraternities. Luc Duerloo has justly described the combined efforts of the archdukes in the field of religion as part of a 'multi-media offensive'.[19] Again, the concept of a 'theatre state' seems a valuable alternative.

The Habsburg court in the Low Countries deliberately used devotion both in its effort to make subjects identify with the dynasty and to forge some sort of supraregional identity for their lands. Particularly telling is the example of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary. This devotion was not a Habsburg invention, but it was ingeniously revived and appropriated in the late fifteenth century by the Habsburg court in the Low Countries.[20] The first confraternities of the Seven Sorrows were created by Jan van Coudenberge, a cleric and secretary of Philip the Fair, and were instituted in the different core principalities of the Low Countries: in Bruges in Flanders, in Abbenbroek and Leiden in Holland, in Reimerswaal in Zeeland, in the

[17] Jan-Dirk Müller, 'The court of Emperor Maximilian I', in *Princes and princely culture, 1450–1650*, ed. Martin Gosman, Alasdair Macdonald and Arjo Vanderjagt, 2 vols. (Leiden/Boston, 2003–2005), I, 295–311, esp. 308.

[18] Wilma Keesman, 'De Bourgondische invloed op de genealogische constructies van Maximiliaan van Oostenrijk', *Millennium* 8 (1994), 162–172; Catrien Santing, '"I never promised you a rosegarden". De hofcultuur van Maximiliaan I en de Bourgondische Nederlanden', in *Die spätmittelalterliche Rezeption Niederländischer Literatur im Deutschen Sprachgebiet*, ed. Rita Schlusemann and Paul Wackers (Amsterdam/Atlanta, 1997), 143–174.

[19] Luc Duerloo, 'Pietas Albertina. Dynastieke vroomheid en herbouw van het vorstelijk gezag', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 112 (1997), 1–18; Werner Thomas, 'Andromeda unbound. The reign of Albert & Isabella in the Southern Netherlands, 1598–1621', in *Albert & Isabella*, 1–14; Luc Duerloo, 'Archducal piety and Habsburg power', in *Albert & Isabella*, 267–283.

[20] Carol M. Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin. Popular culture and cultic imagery in pre-Reformation Europe', *Simiolus* 21 (1992), 5–28.

Thabor convent near Mechelen, and in Antwerp in Brabant.[21] In a history of the confraternity that he composed for Charles V in 1519, Van Coudenberge relates how near the end of the rebellions (1482–1492) during the regency of Maximilian of Austria, when the Low Countries were divided by civil war, many depressed people had found solace by meditating upon the pains and fears that the Blessed Virgin had suffered for her only son. According to Van Coudenberge, this new devotion was so successful that he decided to institute a confraternity with as few rules as possible and no admission fee, so that everyone could become a member. Philip the Fair himself offered to patronise the devotion.[22]

The devotion of the Seven Sorrows very cleverly played upon the popular sentiments of war-weariness and Burgundian patriotism by encouraging worshippers to fuse the image of the Virgin Mary mourning for her only son with that of the late duchess Mary of Burgundy.[23] In his capacity as a 'natural prince', Philip the Fair was seen as the antithesis of his foreign father Maximilian of Austria.[24] Moreover, his mother Mary of Burgundy, who had the advantage of having died young, had become a very popular, idealised character in vernacular literature.[25] Through the promotion of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows, with its strong undercurrent of Burgundian nostalgia, the court hoped to attract people to the idea of dynastic and territorial unity. In a vernacular privilege issued in 1511 by Maximilian and his

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[21] *Hier beghint een goede oefeninghe ende een seer devote meditacye van sonderlinghen vij. ween onser sueter vrouwen ende moeder gods marien metten artikelen van der saligher broderscap daer af begonnen bij den seer hooghen ende doerluchtighen prince heere Philips Eertshertoghe van Oistenrijke, hertoge van Bourgondien, van Brabant etc. Ende in ghestelt in iiij. Kerkcken Te wetene tot Antwerpen. Tot Abbenbroeck te Reymerswale te Leyden ende te Thabor bij Mechlen jnder formen ende manieren hier na volghende* (Antwerp: Gheraert Leeu, [1492]); Adolf Duclos, *De eerste eeuw van het Broederschap der zeven weedommen van Maria in de Sint-Salvators te Brugge* (Bruges, 1922), 35–36.

[22] Pérégrin-Marie Soulier, *La confrérie de Notre-Dame des sept Douleurs dans les Flandres, 1491–1519* (Brussels, [1912]), 9–14.

[23] Anne-Laure van Bruaene, *Om beters wille. Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400–1650)* (Amsterdam, 2008), 67–68.

[24] Jean-Marie Cauchies, *Philippe le Beau, le dernier duc de Bourgogne* (Turnhout, 2003), 25–29.

[25] See for example '1482 (27 Maart). XII (a en b). Van Vrou Marie van Bourgoengien', in *Middelnederlandsche historieliedern*, ed. C. Catherina van de Graft (Epe, 1904), 95–100; Gilbert Degroote, 'Diets-Bourgondische letteren te Brussel', *Dietsche warande en belfort* 1952, 402–421.

grandson Charles to the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows in Brussels it was related:

> how during the tribulation and discord that came to our Low Countries soon after the decease of…lady Mary of Burgundy…the devout confraternity of the Seven Sorrows of Our Blessed Lady the mother of God sprang up and arose, to which many good people immediately adhered in protection of us, Maximilian, of our children and for the common welfare of our territories; and they had such a devotion for it that…by virtue of the aforementioned mother of God…were ended all the aforementioned tribulations and discord and were united our subjects in good obedience and concord.[26]

The dynastic devotion to the Seven Sorrows played upon existing feelings of exhaustion and distress and was clearly meant to reach as many people as possible. Therefore, it was encouraged through a whole array of interrelated media such as confraternities, painting, sculpture, devotional treatises, miracle books, woodcuts, preaching, offices and religious music.[27]

Yet, arguably the most innovative and effective medium to reach a large audience was popular theatre. On 25 March 1494, a vernacular play about the Seven Sorrows was staged on the marketplace of Mechelen. Besides many townsmen, Philip the Fair and his court were also present. The play, that included *tableaux vivants* with scenes taken from the Old Testament, lasted for five hours. According to Jan van Coudenberge, the audience was extremely moved. People wept profusely for compassion with the Virgin, no one was bored or unruly—not even young Philip—, and no one wanted the play to finish. Everyone—Philip included—insisted on a new performance. This staging, a few days later, attracted a huge influx of spectators.[28] Although we only have Van Coudenberge's narrative to rely upon, this scene can be decoded as a masterly example of the Habsburg theatre state in action. Not only were theatrical forms used to publicly communicate a political message to the audience; in addition, Duke Philip the Fair was featured in

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[26] Brussels, City Archives, nr. 3413 (*Liber Authenticus*), f. 29r. The translation of the Middle-Dutch text is mine.

[27] Soulier, *La confrérie*; Duclos, *De eerste eeuw*.

[28] Willem van Eeghem, 'Rhetores Bruxellenses', *Belgisch tijdschrift voor filologie en geschiedenis* 14 (1935), 427–448, at 434–435; Susie Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval and the Brussels Leliebroeders (1490–1500). The model of a conformist rhetoricians chamber?', in *Conformisten en rebellen. Rederijkerscultuur in de Nederlanden (1400–1650)*, ed. Bart Ramakers (Amsterdam, 2003), 95–106, at 97.

the public play of devotion as a character whose dramatised behaviour merited imitation by his subjects. Simultaneously, the devotion of the Seven Sorrows became part of civic culture. The 1494 play was written by Hendrik Maes, a canon who acted as the playwright of the local chamber of rhetoric *De Peoene*.[29] A few months later, a play of the Seven Sorrows was performed in Leiden by the local rhetoricians. In the same town, a large drama competition had been held in 1493. It was the first rhetorician festival we know of for Holland and one of the few competitions in that county that included participants from Flanders and Brabant.[30] In the following years, many other chambers of rhetoric in Brabant, Flanders and Holland staged similar vernacular plays about the Seven Sorrows, increasingly in small towns.[31]

It has to be underlined that the Habsburg court in the Low Countries was much more sensitive than its Burgundian predecessor to the political value of the theatrical and ritual expertise of the chambers of rhetoric.[32] It is possible that this had something to do with linguistic sensibilities, since it was the Dutch-speaking chambers of rhetoric, in particular, which were targeted. In any case, Maximilian of Austria (who later prided himself on his knowledge of Flemish) had been the first prince to attend a competition of the rhetoricians in person, when he went to see the *landjuweel* that was held in Leuven in 1478.[33] Yet during the wars of the 1480s and 1490s it had become clear to the court that the chambers of rhetoric were primarily urban institutions that represented local identities and could communicate subversive political messages to large audiences.[34] Therefore, soon after the wars had come to an end, the Habsburg court targeted a true cultural offensive at the chambers of rhetoric. In 1493, all Dutch-speaking chambers were summoned to send representatives, supplied with play texts and ballads, to a large meeting in Mechelen that was patronised by Philip the Fair.

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[29] Eugeen van Autenboer, *Volksfeesten en rederijkers te Mechelen, 1400–1600* (Ghent, 1962), 152–153.

[30] Herman Brinkman, *Dichten uit liefde. Literatuur in Leiden aan het einde van de Middeleeuwen* (Hilversum, 1997), 81–87.

[31] Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval', 97.

[32] The involvement of Charles the Bold, alluded to in the introduction to the edition of the *spelen van zinne* cited at the beginning of this essay, was limited to the granting of a privilege (during the duke's absence from the Low Countries) to *De Fonteine* in Ghent in 1476; see Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 58–59.

[33] C.A.J. Armstrong, 'The language question in the Low Countries', in *Europe in the late Middle Ages*, ed. John R. Hale (London, 1965), 386–409, at 398.

[34] Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 61–63.

It was most likely on this occasion that the young duke rewarded a rhetorician, the Brussels' poet Jan vanden Dale, with a golden ring, a practice reminiscent of the coronation of Latin poets on *Reichstage*.[35] During the meeting in Mechelen, it became clear that the court not only wanted to discuss the subject matter of rhetorician literature, in itself a truly remarkable fact, but that it also intended to institute a princely chamber of rhetoric. This sovereign head chamber, *De Balsemblomme*, which in theory would travel with the court, was given the right to authorise new chambers, and to screen and rewrite the statutes of the ones in existence. It is clear that the primary aim of all these actions was to gain control over the local chambers of Rhetoric. The urgency of this mission was underlined by the fact that the meeting in Mechelen immediately followed a meeting of the States General.[36]

Ingenious and ambitious as the institution of a princely chamber of rhetoric may have seemed—a sort of cultural parallel to the central judicial and financial institutions[37]—it soon proved to be a complete failure. This was a lesson that the Burgundian dukes had learned in their time; it was pointless to try to control this complex urban world when one could not pull the strings from within. Negotiation, adaptation and compromise remained the keywords.[38] For this reason, it was much more fruitful to patronise existing chambers of rhetoric and sponsor the manifestations they organised. Large-scale competitions that brought together rhetoricians from different principalities and that could, as such, promote the cultural integration of the Low Countries, were encouraged by the court, such as the *landjuweel* that was organised by *De Violieren* in Antwerp in 1496.[39] The devotion of the Seven Sorrows

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[35] Dieter Mertens, 'Zu Sozialgeschichte und Funktion des poeta laureatus im Zeitalter Maximilians I.', in *Gelehrte im Reich. Zur Sozial- und Wirkungsgeschichte akademischer Eliten des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Rainer C. Schwinges (Berlin, 1996), 327–348; Anne-Laure van Bruaene, 'Minnelijke rederijkers, schandelijke spelen. De rederijkerskamers in Brussel tussen 1400 en 1585', in *De macht van het schone woord. Literatuur in Brussel van de 14de tot de 18de eeuw*, ed. Jozef Janssens and Remco Sleiderink (Leuven, 2003), 125–139, at 129–130.

[36] *Oorspronck der cameren van Rhetorycke, statuten ende ordonnancien der selve onder den titel Jesus metter Balsem Bloume*, ed. René Haeserijn (Ghent, 1960); Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 63–66 and 73–76.

[37] On these institutions, see Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier, *De Bourgondiërs. De Nederlanden op weg naar eenheid, 1384–1530* (Amsterdam, 1997), 138–144, 209–217 and 227–235.

[38] Arnade, *Realms of ritual*, 208–209.

[39] Eugeen van Autenboer, 'Een landjuweel te Antwerpen in 1496?', *Jaarboek de Fonteine* 29 (1978–1979), 125–150; Werner Waterschoot, 'Het landjuweel te Antwerpen

offered an accompanying discourse to win the Netherlandish subjects for the idea of dynastic and territorial unity.

The subject matter of the Seven Sorrows became generally accepted thanks to the theatrical performances by chambers of rhetoric all over the Low Countries that had no direct ties with the court. Prominent chambers of rhetoric in Antwerp and Brussels were also encouraged to enhance their efforts by the establishment of new confraternities of the Seven Sorrows. The Antwerp artists' guild of St Luke, that had strong institutional links with *De Violieren*, founded a confraternity in 1495, shortly after an extended visit to Antwerp by Philip the Fair and Maximilian of Austria (in his new position as emperor).[40] In Brussels, the chamber of rhetoric *De Lelie*, that had close contacts with the court, instituted a confraternity of the Seven Sorrows in the church of St Géry in 1499. This large confraternity could rely upon the patronage of Emperor Maximilian, Duke Philip the Fair and many other high nobles. Philip the Fair bestowed the chapel with a beautifully crafted bench as an enduring reminder of his devotion. In 1507, *De Lelie* decided to merge with another Brussels' chamber to create a new chamber called *Het Mariacransken.* This new chamber of rhetoric continued to promote the devotion of the Seven Sorrows by organising an annual procession with rhetorical performances in order to pray for the dynasty and its territories. These ongoing efforts were rewarded with a privilege from Emperor Maximilian and his grandson Charles in 1511. The princes decided to strenghthen their patronage by recognising the chapel of the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows as a princely chapel, and by allowing the rhetoricians of *Het Mariacransken* the status of princely servants in the duchy of Brabant.[41]

A form of Marian devotion that enjoyed the reputation of having ended civil war in the Low Countries could not but arouse the interest of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella. Perhaps as early as 1602, they enlisted as members of the Brussels confraternity of the Seven Sorrows. They endowed its chapel with many works of art. More gen-

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in 1496. Enkele teksten en hun interpretatie', *Jaarboek de Fonteine* 32 (1980–1981), 49–68; Maurits Vandecasteele, 'Het Antwerpse rederijkersfeest van 1496. Een onderzoek van de bronnen', *Jaarboek de Fonteine* 36–37 (1985–1986), 149–176.

[40] *De liggeren en andere historische archieven der Antwerpsche Sint Lucasgilde, onder zinspreuk: 'Wt ionsten versaemt'*, ed. Philips Rombouts and Th. Van Lerius (Antwerp/The Hague, s.d.), 51; Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 68–69.

[41] Speakman Sutch, 'Jan Pertcheval', 101; Van Bruaene, 'Minnelijke rederijkers', 127–131.

erally, the archdukes eagerly revived the devotion to the Seven Sorrows and exploited its symbolism by using the number seven in many religious settings, particularly in those that gave a central place to the Virgin Mary.[42] In 1620, at the request of *Het Mariacransken*, the 1511 privilege of Maximilian and Charles of Austria was reconfirmed. A few days later the archdukes presented the chamber with a large sum of money to restore the bench offered by Philip the Fair.[43]

Notably, *Het Mariacransken* contributed to the festivities in honour of the archdukes in Brussels in 1615. This is remarkable since some decades before, the Brussels' chambers of rhetoric had been notorious for their Calvinist orientation. The general involvement of the chambers of rhetoric in the Low Countries in the spreading of Reformation ideas had led to serious repression by the central authorities at the end of the sixteenth century, but many chambers had weathered the storm, in particular those which had retained good relations with local elites. Especially during the Twelve-Years' Truce, the archdukes showed their princely appreciation by explicitly patronising chambers of rhetoric in large cities such as Brussels, Antwerp and Mechelen and in former industrial centres such as Hondschote. The Habsburg court clearly believed that through a combination of general censorship and selective patronage the onetime subversive chambers of rhetoric could well be mustered to serve its purpose of territorial and Catholic restoration.[44] In this sense, the court was probably charmed by the initiative of *De Peoene* in Mechelen in 1620 to organise a large competition with participants not only from Flanders and Brabant but also from the United Provinces. During the competition all participants eloquently pleaded for the prolongation of the truce and the restoration of peace.[45]

It has to be underlined that the initiative to revive rhetorician culture came from below, from the chambers of rhetoric themselves that were supported by their local magistracies. The archdukes never embarked on a cultural offensive to appropriate rhetorician culture comparable

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[42] Duerloo, 'Archducal piety', 272–273.

[43] Brussels, City Archives, nr. 3413 (*Liber Authenticus*), f. 47r–48v.

[44] Van Bruaene, 'De contouren', 225–227; Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, 177–183.

[45] Marc van Vaeck, '"De Schadt-Kiste der philosophen ende poeten" (Mechelen 1621). Een blazoenfeest aan de vooravond van het einde van het Bestand', *De zeventiende eeuw* 8 (1992), 75–83. Cf. Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, '"Het vaderland" bij Hollandse rederijkers, circa 1580–1625. Grondgebied en identiteit', in *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*, ed. N.C.F. van Sas (Amsterdam, 1999), 83–107.

to that of Maximilian of Austria and Philip the Fair. Yet, Isabella and Albert demonstrated a remarkable sensibility for the political potential of the public manifestations of the more socially exclusive shooting guilds. While the princely preoccupation with the chambers of rhetoric had largely been a Habsburg innovation, there was, at first sight, nothing new in their patronage of the shooting guilds. From its beginnings, the Burgundian dynasty had shown a keen interest in these urban corporations with their elite membership and military ethos. The Burgundian dukes granted privileges to many shooting guilds that, at that time, still could be called upon to perform military service. Yet, the most important incentive to grant privileges to these guilds was the possibility of gaining access to the ritual networks of urban elites. As such, the Burgundian dukes became honorary members of many shooting guilds all over the Low Countries and they frequently participated in person in large interregional shooting festivals.[46]

In this regard, the Habsburg court continued along Burgundian lines. In 1498, a large interregional shooting festival was held in Ghent by the crossbow guild of St George. In many respects, this competition followed the script of an earlier festival that had been held in the same city in 1440 and that had been attended by Duke Philip the Good. The 1498 competition was graced by the presence of Duke Philip the Fair and Duchess Joanna of Castile. This was a public acknowledgement of the fact that the court had finally forgiven Ghent for its leading role in the wars of the 1480s and 1490s. Philip's actual participation in the competition as one of the members of the crossbow guild from Bruges was later immortalised in a woodcut in the *Excellente Cronike van Vlaenderen*, published in 1531. The *Excellente Cronike* was a regional chronicle that combined an urban orientation with an explicitly dynastic undertone. This agenda was also reflected in the woodcut; by depicting him as an urban crossbowman in an urban setting, the duke exemplified how local and dynastic identities could be harmoniously fused.[47] Habsburg princes also occasionally participated in person or through a representative in the local shooting competitions that the guilds organised annually. One of these local festivities was held in Brussels in 1512 on the initiative of the crossbow guild. The future

[46] Arnade, *Realms of ritual*, 78–83.

[47] Arnade, *Realms of ritual*, 182–185; Johan Oosterman, 'De Excellente cronike van Vlaenderen en Anthonis de Roovere', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal- en letterkunde* 118 (2002), 22–37.

Charles V, at that time a young teenager still under the guardianship of his grandfather Emperor Maximilian, successfully shot at the popinjay. His triumph was later commemorated in a painting offered by governess Mary of Hungary to the Brussels' crossbow guild, and it continued to be exalted in vernacular literature.[48]

The idealised victory of the future Charles V in 1512 served as a direct model for a shooting competition in Brussels in 1615 that was to be the most elaborate effort of the archducal court to engage in public civic culture. The triumph of Isabella at the shooting and at the following festive events have been immortalised in a series of paintings by Denijs van Alsloot and Antoon Sallaert. These paintings have recently been decoded by Sabine Van Sprang and, thanks to her analysis, the meaning of this chain of events has been unravelled. Thereby, it has become clear that the participation and victory of the Archduchess, leading towards her proclamation as queen for life of the crossbow guild, directly served the interests of both the court and the Brussels' elites.[49]

Since the ascent of the Burgundian dynasty in the duchy of Brabant, Brussels had spared no efforts to promote itself as the ideal ducal residence city. In order to do so, it had, among other things, frequently invited the princes to attend public festivals such as local shooting competitions and the annual *Ommegang*, or procession, that was organised by the crossbow guild. The *Ommegang* was especially renowned for its dramatisation of the genealogy of the dukes of Brabant by members of the trade guilds.[50] The Brussels' magistracy, therefore, saw nothing wrong in the court's suggestion that the *Ommegang* of 1615 would be set up as a celebration of Isabella's recent triumph. Neither did it oppose the publicity that was given to the devotion of the Seven Sorrows during these festivities, although the *Ommegang* was traditionally dedicated to Mary's Seven Joys. If anything, the Brussels' elites considered

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[48] Van Sprang, *Entre réalité et fiction*, 297–298.

[49] Van Sprang, *Entre réalité et fiction*, 286–314. See also Margit Thøfner, 'The court in the city, the city in the court. Denis van Alsloot's depictions of the 1615 Brussels ommegang', *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 49 (1998), 185–201; Thøfner, *A common art*, 234–244.

[50] Robert Stein, 'Cultuur en politiek in Brussel in de vijftiende eeuw. Wat beoogde het Brusselse stadsbestuur bij de annexatie van de plaatselijke Ommegang?', in *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen*, ed. Herman Pleij *et al.* (Amsterdam, 1991), 228–243; Remco Sleiderink, 'Grootse ambities. Culturele initiatieven van de stad Brussel ten tijde van Filips de Goede', in *De macht van het schone woord*, 107–123.

the patronage of the archdukes as a sanction of their own social and political position.[51]

The archducal court, in its turn, not only used Isabella's victory in an urban shooting competition as a means to involve its subjects and to oblige its urban elites, but also deployed it as a subtle message to remind the Spanish court that, although Philip III would become sovereign after the death of the ailing Albert, the inhabitants of the Low Countries perceived Isabella as their 'natural' princess. Moreover, by showing off her ability in the arts of weaponry, Isabella's masculine virtues were underlined.[52] Therefore, monumental paintings commemorating the festivities were not only put on display at the Brussels court, but were also sent—together with the wooden popinjay—to the court of King Philip III. At the same time, copies were ordered by the city of Brussels and by the church of the Sablon that traditionally hosted the *Ommegang*. A triptych by Otto Venius was offered by the court to the crossbow guild. Engravings and commemorative coins were made available to the citizens.[53] Therefore, there can be no doubt who the intended public was of this Habsburg theatre state that had dramatically fused urban and courtly political agendas.

On a smaller scale, similar encounters took place in other cities. In 1618, Archduchess Isabella shot at the popinjay in Ghent during a local shooting competition that was organised by the crossbow guild of St George. Again, a commemorative painting was commissioned, but this time at the initiative of the crossbow guild itself. There are other indications that the city was more instrumental than the court in the staging of this festival. For one, Isabella did not triumph at the shooting. In addition, she and Albert only accepted membership and endowed the guild with a large sum of money some time after the festival, and after a smaller gift had been presented.[54] The Ghent encounter thus seems to have been an example of the extensive but less engaged patronage of shooting guilds all over the Low Countries. In

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[51] Van Sprang, *Entre réalité et fiction*, 296–299.

[52] On Isabella and gender politics, see Margit Thøfner, '"Domina & Princeps proprietaria". The ideal of sovereignity in the Joyous Entries of the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella', in *Albert & Isabella*, 55–66.

[53] Van Sprang, *Entre réalité et fiction*, 287 et 300–304.

[54] Liesbeth de Frenne, 'Verzoening en herstel van het vorstelijk gezag. De aartshertogen Albrecht en Isabella en de stad Gent (1598–1621)', *Handelingen van de Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent* 60 (2006), 247–284, at 256–259.

doing so the archdukes not only reinforced their dynastic identity but also, willingly or not, promoted strong localism. They did not sponsor large interregional shooting festivals that could have enhanced a feeling of national belonging. Rather to the contrary, the patronage of the shooting guilds was copied by local lords such as Duchess Anne de Croÿ who was crowned queen of the crossbow guild of Aarschot in 1619.[55]

Less so than Maximilian of Austria and Philip the Fair, the archdukes seized upon the opportunity to mould the pre-existing diffuse mixture of local, regional and territorial identities of their urban subjects into something larger, something that could give rise to a lasting national identity.[56] Instead, the archdukes chose militant Catholicism to psychologically mark the frontiers between the Spanish Low Countries and the Calvinist infected United Provinces and France.[57] On the other hand, the archdukes made much more of an effort than Charles V and Philip II before them to be present in the urban public sphere and to give real meaning to this presence.[58] They took their mission of becoming 'natural' princes (at least in its appearance) to heart. As such, they countered the attempts of the rebels during the first years of the Dutch Revolt to elect their own 'natural' prince (namely the duke of Anjou). In both cases, Burgundian ancestry, respect for local privileges and local civic traditions, and physical presence were seen as a prerequisite for princely 'naturalness'.[59] In this process, the Burgundian myth was constantly reinvented. While Philip the Good was remembered as the unifier of the Low Countries, Charles V soon came to be promoted as a model of ideal rulership.[60] Such claims, shared by the court and urban elites, did not remain uncontested, however. When a wooden

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[55] Thomas, 'Andromeda unbound', 12; *Albrecht & Isabella. Catalogus*, ed. Luc Duerloo and Werner Thomas (Turnhout, 1998), 200–201 and 204–215.

[56] On the archdukes' vision of 'Belgica', see Cordula Schumann, 'Court, city and countryside. Jan Brueghel's peasant weddings as images of social unity under archducal sovereignty', in *Albert & Isabella*, 151–160.

[57] Muchembled, 'Koningstrouw', 188.

[58] Martin van Gelderen, *The political thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555–1590* (Cambridge, 2002²), 19; Wim Blockmans, *Keizer Karel V, 1500–1558. De utopie van het keizerschap* (Leuven, 2000), 164–168; Duke, 'The elusive Netherlands', 33. The future Philip II's series of joyous entries in 1549, discussed by Robert Stein in his introduction, was not typical of his involvement in urban ceremonial.

[59] Thøfner, '"Domina & Princeps proprietaria"', 61–62; Van Bruaene, 'Spectacle and spin', 279.

[60] Bart de Groof, 'Alexander Farnese and the origins of modern Belgium', *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 63 (1993), 195–219, at 217–218; Peter Burke,

statue of Charles V was erected in the market place of Ghent at the occasion of the joyous entry of the archdukes in 1600, it needed to be guarded from attacks of ordinary citizens who had not forgotten the punishment the emperor had imposed upon the city in 1540.[61] These ordinary men were probably not as convinced as their urban magistracies of the blessings of the dramatically enacted political alliance between the princes and civic elites.

Conclusion

This essay has focussed on the efforts of the Habsburg court to engage with public civic culture in order to appropriate and remould civic identities. It is evident that, especially by its later commemorations in print and visual artwork, these efforts served the larger goal of dynastic propaganda. And, of course, as the accounts of ordinary chroniclers frequently remind us, the events themselves were seen by many as mere shows of spectacle with fireworks, wine fountains and beautifully dressed courtiers. Yet, this essay has shown that through such events the Habsburg court also continued to communicate at different levels with its urban subjects. First of all, local elites were addressed. The theatrical performance of the prince or princess as an urban crossbow archer enabled court and civic elites to fuse political agendas and send powerful messages to nearby and distant audiences. By sponsoring the chambers of rhetoric, the Habsburg princes descended one step further into this urban world, since at least until the seventeenth century these corporations were less elitist than the shooting guilds. The prince, of course, could never become a rhetorician himself, but he could attend vernacular theatre performances, and as such show his appreciation for the burgeoning linguistic and territorial identities. In particular, the patronage of large-scale interregional competitions, both of the shooting guilds and of the chambers of rhetoric, underline the fact that, the princes were supportive of identity-formation from below and that citizens actively sought this support. Finally, the court played upon existing traditions of Marian piety, war-weariness and

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'Karel V (her)bekeken', in *Karel V, 1500–1558. De keizer en zijn tijd*, ed. Hugo Soly (Antwerp, 1999), 393–475, at 452–459; Duke, 'The elusive Netherlands', 23.

[61] De Frenne, 'Verzoening en herstel', 253–254.

Burgundian nostalgia among the population at large, by promoting a remarkably accessible devotion that made it easier for people of different backgrounds to identify with the Habsburg dynasty and its territorial concerns. The experience of internal war and civil strife had taught some Habsburg rulers and their courtiers the importance of managing public opinion. What Maximilian of Austria and Philip the Fair, on the one hand, and the archdukes, on the other hand, seem to have grasped more thoroughly than Charles V, Philip II and some of their Burgundian predecessors: territorial unity and 'natural' rulership—let alone national identity—were certainly not a given nor a matter of military force alone. In the civic world of the Low Countries, their power was all about a carefully scripted and recorded symbolic and physical presence and about ritual action and performance.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WAR AND IDENTITY IN THE HABSBURG NETHERLANDS, 1477–1559

Steven Gunn

The nature of the available evidence has inevitably drawn studies of national identity in the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries towards social and cultural elites: chroniclers, legislators, political leaders, university students travelling to Italy, and even individual intellectuals like Erasmus. Such studies can illuminate the development of identities amongst the wider population by inference. Those who read the chronicles, heard the ordinances proclaimed, were inspired by the leaders, or were taught by the students, presumably absorbed some of the ideas on the nature of their homeland. But it remains hard to test whether they did so.

Within these limitations, these studies have reached valuable and nuanced conclusions. They suggest that there was no agreed name for a nation inhabiting those lands; that the language of nationhood was far more often used of provinces or small groups of provinces than of any larger unit; and that provincial and dynastic loyalties were more powerful than any kind of national attachments, as we might expect from the comparatively rapid changes in the territorial composition of the Burgundian-Habsburg bloc. By the 1550s, terms suggestive of a single body politic including all the Habsburg provinces—*le pays* (rather than *les pays*) *de pardeça; patrie, patria*, or *vaderlant; Belgium* or *Belgica*—occur more frequently, which suggests an underlying change in attitudes. They argue plausibly that high noblemen and princely bureaucrats thought more readily in terms of larger allegiances than did those with less to gain from the exercise of princely power, and that those in the more recently acquired provinces felt less part of a common enterprise than those in the core Burgundian territories.[1]

[1] Karin Tilmans, 'De ontwikkeling van een vaderland-begrip in de laat-middeleeuwse en vroeg-moderne geschiedschrijving van de Nederlanden', in *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*, ed. N.C.F. van Sas (Amsterdam, 1999), 7–53; Simon

A study of the effects of war on identity cannot overcome all the difficulties faced by these studies—indeed, many of its sources too must be the products of chroniclers, legislators, poets and politicians—but it does offer significant opportunities. War generated many of the 'boundary situations' referred to by Peter Hoppenbrouwers in his survey of the theoretical literature above. It provided a major stimulus for governments to deploy rhetoric about the unity of the polity and the duties of subjects towards it: in war, as one ordinance of Charles V put it, 'subjects are obliged to serve and stand by their own natural prince and fatherland before all other lords'.[2] War engaged large sections of the population in a common cause and demanded action from them, from paying taxes and celebrating victories to building fortifications and killing those they were told were their enemies. It demanded cooperation between different parts of the polity: different provinces, townsmen and countrymen, noblemen and urban elites, local populations and the foreign soldiers their prince sent to defend them. Again, government rhetoric stressed the need for cooperation. In 1535 Mary of Hungary proposed a union of mutual defence to the provinces gathered in the States General. An attack on one province, she argued, concerned 'the person and estate of the said lord emperor and of his other lands and subjects over here', so that 'all good and loyal subjects of the same should help and rescue him in this, and thereby assist the said invaded and attacked land'.[3] As the Burgundian-Habsburg polity

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Groenveld, '"Natie" en "patria" bij zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanders', in *Vaderland*, 55–81; Jean Stengers, *Les racines de la Belgique* (Brussels, 2000); Alastair Duke, 'From king and country to king or country? Loyalty and treason in the Revolt of the Netherlands', in Alastair Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London, 1990), 175–197; Alastair Duke, 'The elusive Netherlands. The question of national identity in the early modern Low Countries on the eve of the Revolt', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 119 (2004), 10–38; Ad Tervoort, *The Iter Italicum and the Northern Netherlands. Dutch students at Italian universities and their role in the Netherlands' society (1426–1575)* (Leiden, 2005), 186–196; J.J. Poelhekke, 'Het naamloze vaderland van Erasmus', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 86 (1971), 90–123; Hugo de Schepper, 'Introduction au répertoire des institutions dans les Pays-Bas habsbourgeois', in *Les institutions du gouvernement central des Pays-Bas habsbourgeois (1485–1795)*, ed. Erik Aerts *et al.*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1995), I, 20–36, at 28; Robert Stein, 'Nationale identiteiten in de late Middeleeuwen. Een verkenning', *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 28 (2002), 228–246. I am grateful to Hans Cools, Alastair Duke, David Grummitt and the editors for helpful discussion and references.

[2] *Recueil des ordonnances des Pays-Bas, 2e série: 1506–1700*, ed. Charles Laurent *et al.*, 7 vols. (Brussels, 1893–1957), VI, 346.

[3] *Recueil des ordonnances*, III, 479.

faced the supreme challenge of repeated warfare on multiple fronts—conflicts of various sorts occupying two-thirds or more of the eighty-three years under consideration—we can test whether such action and cooperation took place, and infer what those outcomes tell us about the effect of the government's appeals. Sometimes we can see still more explicitly what the successes and failures of the war effort tell us about the identities of those involved.

We should not expect it to be easy to pin down these identities. Detailed investigations of the formation of national identity elsewhere in early modern Europe suggest a complex picture in which ethnicity, language, class, religion and the ideologies of rule interacted with local appropriation of the state's authority over a long period.[4] Developments before 1559 in the northern and southern Low Countries are easily overshadowed by the rise of national identities, confessionalised, or at least strongly shaped, by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation during and after the Revolt. Individuals may hold several identities at once, provided those identities do not place unbearably conflicting demands upon them, as may have happened to some Netherlanders, when attachments to prince and province began to clash in the years after 1566.[5] In the Burgundian-Habsburg Low Countries many such identities were available, not only social, religious, or gendered identities, but political ones too. One might conceivably be a loyal citizen of one's town, of one's province, of the Low Countries, of the Holy Roman Empire or of the kingdom of France. One might be a loyal subject of one's prince and of the dynasty of which he formed a part. One might be all of these at different times for different purposes. The Valenciennes chronicler Robert Macquéreau noted proudly the great deeds done by individual soldiers from Valenciennes, by Hainaulters, by 'Walloons…of the Low Countries', by Burgundians and by 'the emperor's men'. He thought the inhabitants of Utrecht were fortunate to be ruled by 'such a lord as Charles of Austria, emperor always august' and he avowedly wrote his chronicles for 'the great love that he had for the house of Burgundy'.[6]

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[4] John Armstrong, *Nations before nationalism* (Chapel Hill, 1982); Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries. The making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley CA, 1989).

[5] Duke, 'Loyalty and treason', 184–197.

[6] Robert Macquéreau, *Chronicque de la maison de Bourgogne depuis la naissance de Charles V*, ed. Jean Buchon (Paris, 1838), 33, 35, 44, 210, 215 and *passim*; Robert Macquéreau, *Histoire générale de l'Europe durant les années MDXXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, composée sous le titre de Ce est la Maison de Bourgongne pour trois ans*, ed. Joseph

The impact of war was presumably greatest on those who fought in it. They included, we should remind ourselves, many natives of the Netherlands, north and south. In the 1470s and 1480s troops raised in every province joined in wars, civil and external. From the 1520s to the 1550s Flanders and Brabant were still active recruiting grounds; troops from the southern border provinces fought in northern campaigns and troops from the north fought against the French.[7] Throughout the period Zeelanders, Hollanders, Flemings and Frieslanders served the Habsburgs in war at sea.[8] Yet service in the variegated and decentralised armies the Habsburgs deployed for the defence of the Netherlands was not necessarily a homogenising experience. Charles's regulations for his troops in 1555 foresaw that disputes between soldiers of 'diverse nations' were likely because of 'diversity in language and way of life', not to mention 'reproach for things in the past'; including, presumably, things in the wars between Guelders and the Netherlands, an especially awkward topic since Maarten van Rossum, who had once raided The Hague and besieged Antwerp, had become one of Charles's own commanders.[9] Such disputes split Habsburg forces repeatedly, opposing not only Germans, Spaniards and English to one another and to various varieties of Netherlanders, but also Flemings against Walloons or Geldersen, Walloons against Hollanders, Hollanders and Brabanters against Picards.[10]

What may have had a greater unifying effect was service by Netherlanders in campaigns outside the Netherlands, in the Schmalkaldic War, for example, in Italy or on Charles V's crusading expeditions. To be part of a common enterprise with their prince's other subjects, especially when that prince was present, may have forged a closer loyalty to ruler and dynasty. That was apparently the experience of Fery de Guyon, a Franc-Comtois who campaigned in Burgundian, Spanish and Walloon companies in Italy, France, Austria, North Africa, Germany and the Netherlands. He thought of the armies he fought in as 'the emperor's men' or 'the Burgundians', and their

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Barrois (Paris, 1841), 64, 81–82, 115, 125–126, 136, 139, 224–225, 238, 266, 274–276 and *passim*.

[7] Steven Gunn, David Grummitt and Hans Cools, *War, state and society in England and the Netherlands, 1477–1559* (Oxford, 2007), 295–297.

[8] Louis Sicking, *Zeemacht en onmacht. Maritieme politiek in de Nederlanden, 1488–1558* (Amsterdam, 1998), 200.

[9] *Recueil des ordonnances*, VI, 471; VII 346.

[10] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 300, 315.

greatest role as the 'rebuttal of the enemy of Christendom, the Turk'. Although he settled down at Pecquencourt near Douai, he seems not to have thought of himself as a Netherlander but to have remained a Franc-Comtois at heart, proud that it was a gentleman of Burgundy who first fought his way into Tunis in 1535 and horrified to be served beer rather than wine with his dinner at Cambrai in 1540.[11] For others, however, to be marked out as Netherlanders in a strange land and a polyglot army may well have consolidated some geographical identity beyond that of their town or province. When the 'Flemings' fought the Frenchmen on the West Quay at Southampton in 1536–7, or hungry soldiers and sailors from the Netherlands fell out with the townsfolk of Cadiz in 1552–3, circumstances presumably drove different sorts of Netherlanders together, as they did even in Artois in 1553 when native captains, Brabanters as well as Walloons, asked the duke of Savoy if they might mount a raid on the French 'without any company other than of their own nation'.[12]

Savoy's captains were perhaps concerned to maintain the military reputation of the Netherlanders, just as the representatives at the States General of 1557 were when they argued that the Habsburg regime should employ mainly native troops lest the inherited bellicosity of the 'subjects over here' might be 'bastardised', making them 'totally incompetent for war'.[13] Some foreign ambassadors did comment on the military ability of the Netherlanders in general, but durable military reputations were held more by provinces or towns than by the Netherlands as a whole.[14] Holland's was not good. Hollanders were written off by some contemporaries as better drinkers than fighters and Mary of Hungary commented after the defeat at Sittard in 1543 that they needed large forces to accompany them, 'for loyalty or courage is no longer as great in them as it used to be'.[15] The Namurois, on the contrary, stood out.

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[11] *Mémoires de Fery de Guyon, écuyer, bailly général d'Anchin et de Pesquencourt*, ed. Aimé de Robaulx de Soumoy (Brussels, 1858), 11–12, 17, 59, 75, 84, 88–90.

[12] Southampton Record Office, nr. SC5/3/1, f. 75r; Raymond Fagel, *De Hispano-Vlaamse wereld. De contacten tussen Spanjaarden en Nederlanders, 1496–1555* (Brussels, 1996), 421; *I diari delle campagne di Fiandra di Emanuele Filiberto, duca di Savoia*, ed. Elvira Brunelli and Pietro Egidi (Turin, 1928), 145.

[13] Helmut Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, States Generals and Parliaments. The Netherlands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries* (Cambridge, 2001), 188; K.J.W. Verhofstad, *De regering der Nederlanden in de jaren 1555–1559* (Nijmegen, 1937), 133.

[14] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 296–297.

[15] Wilhelmus Molius, *Kroniek van Molius. Een zestiende-eeuwse Bossche priester over de geschiedenis van zijn stad*, ed. J.A.M. Hoekx *et al.* ('s-Hertogenbosch, 2003),

In 1507 they performed a feat of arms so noteworthy, completely surprising a plundering French force at Saint-Hubert and taking a rich haul of booty, that Jean Lemaire de Belges immediately celebrated it in a printed poem. Lemaire gloried in the humiliation of the proud and over-dressed French by 'our free shepherds, our noble peasants' of the Ardennes, 'each one a little Hercules', led by local squires in the mould of Alexander, Hector and Scipio.[16] Their northern counterparts were the Frisians. That veteran general Adrien de Croÿ-Roeulx suggested in 1552 raising companies in Antwerp, Mechelen and Flanders, but letting the enemy think they were Frisians, because the Frisians were more feared.[17]

One way in which war did enforce adherence to supra-provincial identities was in the intensified application of treason law. Stoked by the bitter divisions of the civil wars of 1477–92 and kept hot by competition with the claims of the French crown, wartime treason trials persisted through the period. Deserters from the Habsburg forces who served in the armies of France or Guelders were regularly hanged or beheaded if caught. So were inhabitants of Mechelen, Limburg and Zeeland who joined Maarten van Rossum's invasion in 1542. So too were soldiers from Guelders who were caught raiding Habsburg territory in 1511, for the Habsburg claim to overlordship of Guelders meant they were regarded as rebels. Civilians as well as soldiers suffered in waves of executions of those allegedly plotting to betray towns, like Tournai in 1527 or Antwerp in 1542, or those spying or acting as guides for the enemy.[18] Exemplary punishment—the display of severed heads or quarters, hanging corpses upside-down, scaffold speeches by notable offenders, the printing of their confessions, the proclamation of sentences abusing enemy kings—aimed to internalise an abhorrence for treason.[19] Perhaps such internalisation produced unbearable

197; John Ward, *The cities and States of Holland (1506–1515). A participative system of government under strain* (Leiden, unpublished PhD thesis, 2001), 353–354, 366; Alexandre Henne, *Histoire du règne de Charles-Quint en Belgique*, 10 vols. (Brussels, 1858–1860), VIII, 80–81.

[16] 'Les chansons de Namur pour la victoire eu contre les françois à Saint Hubert d'Ardenne', in Jean Lemaire de Belges, *Œuvres*, ed. Jean Stecher, 4 vols. (Leuven, 1882–1891), IV, 293–306.

[17] Henne, *Histoire*, IX, 350.

[18] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 255–256.

[19] Louis Brésin, *Chroniques de Flandre et d'Artois. Analyse et extraits pour servir à l'histoire de ces provinces de 1482 à 1560*, ed. E. Mannier (Paris, 1880), 15–16; Macquéreau, *Histoire générale*, 30; Antoine de Lusy, *Le journal d'un bourgeois de*

remorse in the Valenciennes priest who drowned himself in June 1528 after selling a castle to the French.[20] Exemplary pardons at moments of joy were the counterpart of such exemplary savagery: one fortunate renegade, about to be hanged in 1525, was pardoned by the marquis of Aarschot to celebrate the news of Pavia.[21]

Treason was mostly a matter for the front lines, though they might lie almost anywhere in the Low Countries at times of civil war, of deep incursions from France or Guelders or of threatened attack from the sea. Other initiatives by the Habsburg regime to commit all its subjects to the support of its wars reached more evenly across its territories. One was the spreading of news of its victories. Town councils were informed by letter of campaigns near at hand and far away and told that good news was to be 'propounded to the people', disseminated through the parish clergy 'so that everyone might take courage'.[22] Printed polemical material justifying wars or exhorting subjects to support the ruler was produced in ever increasing volume, with particular waves in 1477–8, 1527–9 and 1541–3.[23] These publications, some in humanist Latin with crisp italic typeface, others in French or

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Mons, 1505–1536, ed. Armand Louant (Brussels, 1969), 353; Pasquier de le Barre, *Le journal d'un bourgeois de Tournai. Le second livre des chroniques de Pasquier de le Barre (1500–1565)*, ed. Gérard Moreau (Brussels, 1975), 253–254; *Calendar of letters, despatches, and state papers, relating to the negotiations between England and Spain preserved in the archives at Simancas and elsewhere*, 13 vols. (London, 1862–1954), V(i), 404; Josse de Weert, 'Chronycke van Nederlant, besonderlyck der stadt Antwerpen, sedert den jaeree 1097 tot den jaere 1565', in *Chroniques de Brabant et de Flandre*, ed. Charles Piot (Brussels, 1879), 71–147, at 114; 'Vlaamsche kronyk', in *Chroniques de Brabant et de Flandre*, 295–296; *Copie de la confession qui capitain Buz a cogneu et co[n]fesse pardeva[n]t le co[n]seil de lempereur & devant la iustice de la ville de Gand: de la trahison par luy com[m]is contre la Maieste de lempereur* (Antwerp, 1544) (unique copy, Lanhydrock House library, Cornwall).

[20] Macquéreau, *Histoire générale*, 86.

[21] Macquéreau, *Chronicque*, 144.

[22] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 258; *Inventaire analytique et chronologique des chartes et documents appartenant aux archives de la ville d'Ypres*, ed. Isidore Diegerick, 7 vols. (Bruges, 1853–1868), VII, 230; Archives Municipales de Douai, nr. EE 60.

[23] *Recueil de pièces historiques imprimées sous le règne de Louis XI*, ed. E. Picot and H. Stein, 2 vols. (Paris, 1923), I, 213–262, 347–348; *Nederlandsche bibliographie van 1500 tot 1540*, ed. Wouter Nijhoff and Maria Kronenberg, 5 vols. (The Hague, 1919–1971), nrs. 582–583, 700, 1263–1267, 1269, 1352, 1483, 1624–1625, 1781–1783, 3297, 3384, 3495–3496, 3978, 4268; *Belgica typographica, 1541–1600. Catalogus librorum impressorum ab anno MDXLI ad annum MDC in regionibus quae nunc Regni Belgarum partes sunt*, ed. Elly Cockx-Indestege and Geneviève Glorieux, 5 vols. (Nieuwkoop, 1968–1994), nrs. 42, 179, 204, 226–228, 309, 416, 2045–2046, 4051, 4068, 5139–5140, 5187, 7141, 7809, 7823, 8604.

Dutch in small gothic, were deliberately aimed at a range of readerships: one Dutch translator commented that those now able to read official documents for themselves, in his translation, would be astonished at the dishonourable behaviour of Francis I of France.[24] The loyalist tone of these official publications was generally shared by the booming genre of cheap newsprint, especially in the inter-connected wars of 1542–4, when popular anger and anxiety were readily focussed on 'the tyrannous wolf Maarten van Rossum' and expectations rested on Charles, 'the imperial Majesty with great armies on foot and on horseback', 'that noble blood who has always victoriously had victory', whose approach to save the Netherlands was 'true, happy news'.[25] Songs, poems and chronicles, all generally favourable to the Habsburgs and their wars, filled the bookshops, while for those in need of a rapid revision course, Willem Vorsterman of Antwerp offered in 1527 abridged chronicles of the last fourteen years of war between Christian princes plus a song in praise of the emperor, all in only four leaves.[26] Thin but striking evidence suggests the penetration of news and propaganda material by the 1540s and 1550s into peripheral provinces such as the Ommelanden, where Abel Eppens and the Van Ewsum family read it.[27]

Those in receipt of news were expected to act upon it, praying for the success of princely campaigns, usually in general processions carrying the sacrament and often with supporting sermons, praying for peace, thanking God for victories and peace treaties with processions,

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[24] *Den ontsegghe vande[n] Coninck van Vranckrijck ende Engelant aen de Keyserlijcke Maiesteyt onsen Heere met zijn Antwoort* (Antwerp, 1528), f. A1v.

[25] Leon Voet, 'Abraham Verhoeven en de Antwerpse pers', *De gulden passer* 31 (1953), 1–37, at 11–14, 29–37; *Belgica typographica*, nrs. 247, 1006, 1016, 1182, 1325, 1899, 2045–2046, 2187, 2219, 2263, 4067, 4300, 4547, 4849, 4854, 5764, 6399, 6400, 6404–6408, 6715, 6975, 7164, 7166, 8395, 9376; *BT*, 7163, 7951, 8079bis, 8090, 8353–4, 8396–8397, 8419, 8474, 8494, 8618, 8811, 8813, 8820, 8825, 8858, 9055, 9236, 9376, 9379, 9382–9384, 9388, 9412–9413; *Typographia Batava 1541–1600*, ed. Paul Valkema Blouw, 2 vols. (Nieuwkoop, 1998), nrs. 5477, 5469; *Sekere nieuwe copie vanden Coninck va[n] Vrankerijck gealliert met de[n] grooten Torck Cleeffe ende Ghelderse teghen die Keyserlicke Maiesteit* (Antwerp, 1542?), f. A2r, A4v.

[26] *Nederlandsche bibliographie*, nrs. 161, 518, 519, 651–660, 1037, 1296; *Belgica typographica*, nr. 215–218, 247, 253–255, 675, 1006, 1740, 2042, 3995, 4151, 4152, 4156, 4485, 4558, 4656, 4849; *Typographia Batava*, nrs. 2964–2971.

[27] Abel Eppens, *De kroniek van Abel Eppens tho Equart*, ed. Johan Feith and Hajo Brugmans, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1911), I, 107, 119; Maria Hartgerink-Koomans, *Het geslacht Ewsum. Geschiedenis van een jonkers-familie uit de Ommelanden in de 15de en 16de eeuw* (Groningen, 1938), 137.

bonfires, general illuminations with torches, tar-barrels and even giant candles on church towers, food, drink, banquets, tableaux-vivants, poems and plays. The rate at which processions were ordered increased as Charles V's wars intensified, as did the insistence with which civic authorities reinforced the call to prayer. They banned work in procession time, closed drinking establishments and required the attendance of all heads of households.[28] Yet the response of urban communities was far from robotic compliance. Processions, prayers and poems for peace seem to have outnumbered those for victory. Certainly celebrations for peace treaties concluded were far larger than those for battles won. No battle was celebrated with festivities as widespread or as elaborate as those for great peace treaties such as Cambrai or Cateau-Cambrésis, and the plays and poems produced by leading rhetoricians such as Cornelis Everaert for victory and peace celebrations alike had much more to say about the beauties of peace and its benefits for trade than about the glories of victory.[29]

The implications of these celebrations for questions of identity are complex. Though organised by town councils and increasingly controlled by chambers of rhetoric, populated by magistrates, clergy, master-craftsmen and, in administrative centres, courtiers and bureaucrats, peace and victory celebrations retained wider popular participation than civic entries or most other general processions.[30] They also drew townsfolk together with those above them, as provincial governors such as Aarschot and even on occasions Mary of Burgundy, Margaret of Austria and Charles himself participated.[31] Their preference for peace over victory may suggest that Netherlanders were not as loyal to the cause of dynastic warfare as the Habsburgs might have wished.

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[28] Hugo Soly, 'Plechtige intochten in steden van de zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de overgang van Middeleeuwen naar Nieuwe Tijd. Communicatie, propaganda, spektakel', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 97 (1984), 341–361, at 349.

[29] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 267, 270–272, 281; Cornelis Everaert, *Spelen*, ed. J.W. Muller and L. Scharpé (Leiden, 1920).

[30] Bart Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren. Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in Oudenaarde tussen Middeleeuwen en Moderne Tijd* (Amsterdam, 1996), 148–152; Eugeen van Autenboer, *Volksfeesten en rederijkers te Mechelen (1400–1600)* (Ghent, 1962), 160–246.

[31] Edward Gailliard, 'De "Processiën generael" en de "Hallegeboden" te Brugge', *Verslagen en mededeelingen der Koninklijke Vlaamsche academie voor taal- en letterkunde* 1912, 1061–1229, at 1106; Macquéreau, *Chronicque*, 145; Macquéreau, *Histoire générale*, 216–217; De Weert, 'Chronycke', 92; *Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J.S. Brewer *et al.*, 23 vols. (London, 1862–1932), III (ii), 1428.

Yet the geographical range of celebration for Cateau-Cambrésis and the way in which recently-acquired provinces were drawn into celebrations of peace and victory alike suggest they served as a vehicle for integration. Equally significantly, South and North were drawn together as Oudenaarde and Valenciennes marked successes against Guelders and Cleves, and as towns in Holland celebrated landmarks in the struggle with France more vigorously than they did triumphs over Guelders.[32]

Presumably orders to celebrate, especially to celebrate peace, were not too painful to receive and execute. Other instructions issued by the Habsburg regime in wartime were less welcome, but may likewise have played a role in drawing Netherlanders together. The Habsburgs forbade their subjects from entering into military service for other princes. In fact they were so adamant that Viglius put the edicts to this effect ahead of those concerning heresy in the central government's priorities for enforcing its legislation in the recalcitrant Ommelanden in 1555. These ordinances used all-encompassing language about the obligation of individuals to 'acquit themselves in the defence of their fatherland'; they penetrated the furthest reaches of the Netherlands, from Friesland and Groningen to Namur and Luxemburg; and they were enforced by the prosecution of individuals as far apart as Holland and Namur.[33]

Similarly, war stimulated both legislation to control food exports and appeals to merchants to supply victuals that were proclaimed far from the front lines. In part the export bans were a means to tax Holland's trade in Baltic grain by selling exemption licences, but they also reflected the disruption caused by war to the agrarian economies of border areas and a genuine need to supply ever larger armies: in the mid-1550s commissioners were buying up oats in Holland for the cavalry on the southern frontier. Such ordinances were amongst those most often printed or explicitly intended for public display in a variety of places such as church doors, town halls, court houses, market

[32] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 271–272; J.G. Smit, *Vorst en onderdaan. Studies over Holland en Zeeland in de late Middeleeuwen* (Leuven, 1995), 300–301, 309, 313.

[33] Folkert Postma, 'De mislukte missie van mr. Maarten van Naarden als luitenant-stadhouder van Stad en Lande 1541–1557', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 120 (2005), 1–27, at 18; *Recueil des ordonnances*, VI, 206–7; Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 243–244.

halls and town gates.[34] They too conveyed messages about identity, one arguing in 1553 that it was reasonable

> that the lands and subjects over here, being under one lord and prince, help and succour one another with all such provender and victuals of which they have enough and to spare, before they sell the same to foreigners.[35]

Such messages apparently sank in. At The Hague noblemen from Guelders were beheaded for supplying food to their compatriots and at Dieppe one Zeeland merchant got himself killed in a fight by accusing another of being a victualler of French warships 'and thus a traitor to his prince'.[36]

More wide-ranging still was the demand for taxation to fund war. Tax negotiations exposed all the tensions between the priorities of prince and subjects and between those of different provinces. Princes wanted large and effective taxes, while the predominantly urban elites represented in provincial States wanted small taxes of a sort readily deflected onto the countryside and the wider urban populace who paid the excises. And while princes wanted taxes for general dynastic warfare and the defence of the entire Netherlands, provincial States quite explicitly voted their taxes for the defence of their province in the singular, and would, as Holland bluntly put it in December 1542, desire to help other provinces defend themselves only when war ceased on their own frontiers.[37] It seems clear that these attitudes persisted in some ways throughout the period: even in the States General of 1558, each province was still trying to lessen its burden in proportion to others', or secure expenditure that met its own particular priorities.[38]

Yet in other ways the Habsburgs' constant emphasis on 'the common welfare and profit of all our lands over here' may have had some

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[34] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 261–262, 289–293; Milja van Tielhof, *De Hollandse graanhandel, 1470–1570. Koren op de Amsterdamse molen*, Hollandse historische reeks 23 (The Hague, 1995), 132–138; James Tracy, *Holland under Habsburg rule, 1505–1566. The formation of a body politic* (Berkeley CA, 1990), 98–105.

[35] *Recueil des ordonnances*, VI, 286.

[36] Henne, *Histoire*, II, 187; *Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales. Nord*, ed. Chrétien Dehaisnes *et al.*, 10 vols. (Lille, 1877–1906), III, 103.

[37] Streekarchief Midden-Holland, SAG, nr. OA 143.

[38] Verhofstad, *Regering*, 143–150.

effect.[39] The crisis of multiple and coordinated invasions in 1542–3 seems to have been a turning point. Thereafter the States of Flanders, Zeeland and Holland began to vote taxes explicitly for the defence of the Netherlands in the plural rather than their province alone and even Brabant, which stuck firmly to singular self-defence in votes of taxation, admitted that the Pragmatic Sanction of 1549 would make the provinces 'so much the stronger, in order to be able to resist the enemies of the land in times to come'.[40] Though stress has rightly been laid on the development of provincial administrative machinery and credit instruments that gave Holland and other provinces the means to make sure that their money was only spent on wars of which they approved, we should not lose sight of the fact that they approved of the Habsburg-Valois wars in the 1550s sufficiently to vote and collect very large sums of money to pay for them, larger in four years in the 1550s, when war was far from Holland's frontiers, than in 1528 and 1543 when she was fighting for her life against Guelders.[41]

Requests for taxation deliberately erased the distinction between the prince's cause and his people's, but in other respects we may be able to separate them. Did it matter to Netherlanders more that they were subjects of Charles V, or of the Burgundian-Habsburgs as a dynasty, than that they were part of a putative nation of the Low Countries? More effort seems to have been put into projecting the image of the martial prince than into cultivating the idea of the nation. Every Habsburg prince fashioned himself as a warrior, appearing in armour on his coinage, in portraits, in statues, in stained glass windows, on medals, even in cheap prints and stamped book-bindings, as his subjects took their lead from official images to depict him for themselves. Every Habsburg prince showed himself the chivalrous leader, knighting those who had served him well in formal ceremonies and riding triumphantly into conquered cities.

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[39] *Lettres inédites de Maximilien, duc d'Autriche, roi des Romains et empereur sur les affaires des Pays-Bas, de 1478 à 1508*, ed. Louis Prosper Gachard, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1851–1852), I, 64.

[40] *Recueil des ordonnances*, V, 109, 536–7, 561, 581; VI, 219; VII, 272, 382, 442.

[41] Tracy, *Holland*, 64–89, 115–124, 180–187; James Tracy, 'The taxation system of the county of Holland during the reigns of Charles V and Philip II, 1519–1566', *Economisch- en sociaal-historisch jaarboek* 48 (1985), 71–117, at 108–109; N. Maddens, *De beden in het graafschap Vlaanderen tijdens de regering van keizer Karel V (1515–1550)*, Standen en landen 72 (Kortrijk-Heule, 1978), 365–411.

Charles in particular stressed his crusading credentials too and there are signs that this struck a chord with his subjects. His march to relieve Vienna in 1532 produced a fever of crusading interest. More news pamphlets were published about the Ottomans than in any other year in the sixteenth century, as was also the only known printed edition of Jean Molinet's *Complaincte de la Terre Saincte*.[42] In Antwerp there were rumours in August that Charles and the Great Turk were about to meet in battle, prompting young members of the urban elite to set out for Austria to help. In 's-Hertogenbosch there was a grand procession with the town church's relics and miraculous image of the Virgin to celebrate wildly exaggerated news of Charles's success.[43] Three years later Charles did score a genuine victory at Tunis, and in the civic entries that came from the 1530s to imitate ever more enthusiastically the triumphs of conquering Roman generals and the prints marketed to commemorate his deeds, it was this success that his subjects trumpeted with more enthusiasm than any other.[44]

Loyalty to the individual ruler was also easy to express, especially when that ruler was Charles. The attractions of a 'natural prince', born at Ghent, were amplified by the majesty of his imperial title, allowing chroniclers, playwrights and poets to laud the victories of 'Charles our emperor'—a title used even by those who lived in Flanders, outside the Empire—and the deeds of 'the emperor's men'. Charles's heraldic devices provided a fund of imagery for the expression of loyalty in drama and verse. The eagle could be represented overpowering the lily or the salamander, outranking other birds, taking flight to overawe his enemies; his device, *plus oultre* expressed the rightful spread of his rule.[45] At the most basic level, 'Vive l'empereur' was a clear thing to shout, as Charles's troops did, while firing off their guns, during an

[42] Nicolette Mout, 'Turken in het nieuws. Beeldvorming en publieke opinie in de zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanden', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 97 (1984), 362–381, at 374–375; *Nederlandsche bibliographie*, nr. 1533.

[43] De Weert, 'Chronycke', 100; *Verzameling van kronyken, charters en oorkonden betrekkelijk de stad en meierij van 's-Hertogenbosch*, ed. C.R. Hermans, 3 vols. ('s-Hertogenbosch, 1848), I, 235.

[44] Jean Jacquot, 'Panorama des fêtes et cérémonies du règne', in *Les fêtes de la renaissance. II. Fêtes et cérémonies au temps de Charles Quint*, ed. Jean Jacquot (Paris, 1960), 413–491, at 449–454, 474; Fernando Checa Cremades, *Carlos V. La imagen del poder en el renacimiento* (Madrid, 1999), 227–234.

[45] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 314.

inspection outside Namur in July 1554.[46] In the same way, new fortifications inscribed the power of individual rulers on the landscape of the Netherlands. This was conspicuously true of the new fortress-towns built to defend the borders in the 1550s—Charlemont, Philippeville, Mariembourg—but it also applied to the bulwarks named for the emperor in the new Italianate fortification schemes of established towns such as Antwerp, Deventer, Flushing and Le Quesnoy.[47]

By such tests the easiest supra-provincial identity to hold and express beyond that of loyalty to the individual ruler was that to Burgundy.[48] In one sense this was simply the generalisation of duty to the prince to cover the dynasty from which he hailed, but in another it was more complex. Netherlanders, after all, did not generally talk of the house of Habsburg or the house of Austria, but of the house of Burgundy. The historic and current identity of Burgundy was contested after 1477 between Maximilian's supporters and his opponents, but seems over the period 1490–1530 to have been established as that of an independent and anti-French entity, not least by the editing and circulation of manuscripts of Chastelain's chronicle in Habsburg court circles in Flanders, Artois and Brabant.[49] This debate made it possible, indeed necessary, for contemporaries to separate the house of Burgundy and all it stood for from the Habsburg dynastic line. Maximilian himself had to persuade the States General in 1499 that his military exertions had sprung from his 'very affectionate and ardent desire and will… to augment, restore and put back into being, honour and prosperity, the said house of Burgundy'.[50]

Under Philip the Fair and Charles, the Habsburg dynasty and the Burgundian cause were more closely entwined: as Maximilian told the States General in respect of Philip, 'the house of Burgundy' was that 'of which our said son is sole head and true heir'.[51] Yet the inheritance of the Spanish thrones and the Austrian lands threatened once again to pull Burgundian and Habsburg interests apart and it is striking how attached Netherlanders remained to the term *Bourguignon*

[46] Rethan Macaré, 'Dagverhaal van den veldtogt van keizer Karel V in 1554', *Kronijk van het Historisch genootschap gevestigd te Utrecht* 7 (1851), 280–308, at 282–283.
[47] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 303–305.
[48] Duke, 'Elusive Netherlands', 14.
[49] Graeme Small, *George Chastelain and the shaping of Valois Burgundy* (Woodbridge, 1997), 197–227.
[50] *Lettres inédites*, II, 93.
[51] *Lettres inédites*, II, 93.

or *Bourgoens*. It was used by chroniclers, poets and pamphleteers in southern and northern provinces alike to describe their princes' cause, and appeared very widely from 1477 to the 1530s, but often beyond, in the cheap news pamphlets of 1542–4 as well as in various published and unpublished texts of the 1550s.[52]

The Burgundian cause deftly combined dynastic loyalty with attachment to a collection of provinces that did not have to be precisely defined as a constitutional unit. It also had clear aural and visual tokens. 'Vive Bourgoigne' served as a loyal acclamation and a war cry. The Burgundian diagonal cross of St Andrew, which readily contrasted with the straight cross of France, was cut into the skin of a French herald's horse at Valenciennes in 1477, chalked on their clothes by the citizens as Arras was retaken in 1492, depicted on countless battle standards and ships' pennons, and hung out by peasants in Württemberg in 1546 to show their sympathies with Charles V's troops.[53] At Tournai in December 1521, some soldiers from the new Habsburg garrison taunted a man undressing in the bath-house about the cross hanging round his neck. They pulled it off, saying it was 'a French cross'.[54] Individual provinces had such tokens of their own: at Guinegatte in 1479, it was said that Maximilian's men went into battle shouting 'Vive Oostenrijc ende Bourgoengne' but the Brabanters cried 'Brabant' and the Flemings 'Vlaendren den leeu'. In the same way a Flemish song celebrated the battle as a victory for the lion of Flanders, striking out with its claws.[55] But it does not seem that the Netherlands as a unit had anything better to shout than 'Vive Bourgoigne', nor a better way to visualise their common identity than through the diagonal cross; at least until the rise of the lion on seals, maps, coins and prints from the

[52] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 313–314.

[53] Edouard Mariage, *Les fortifications de Valenciennes* (Valenciennes, 1891–1895), 60; *Die Geschichten und Taten Wilwolts von Schaumburg*, ed. Adelbert von Keller (Stuttgart, 1859), 132; *Des Viglius von Zwichem Tagebuch des Schmalkaldischen Donaukriegs*, ed. August von Druffel (Munich, 1877), 245; John Hale, *Artists and warfare in the Renaissance* (New Haven CT, 1990), 14–15, 183, 185–187, 190; Sicking, *Zeemacht*, 196–199.

[54] Le Barre, *Journal*, 195.

[55] *Dit sijn die wonderlycke oorloghen van den doorluchtigen hoochgeboren Prince, Keyser Maximiliaen. Hoe hij eerst int landt quam. Ende hoe hij vrou Marien troude*, ed. Wybe Jappe Alberts (Groningen, 1957), 81–82; *Van de dood van Karel de Stoute tot de troonbestijging van aartshertog Karel, 1477–1515. De geschiedenis van België in documenten*, ed. Paul Morren (Brussels, 1997), 95.

1570s, but this was too late to help the Habsburgs.[56] The nearest the dynasty came to formulating an alternative term more inspiring than the geopolitical *le pays de pardeça* or the historical *Belgium* was the attempted fusion of personal, dynastic and local identity in *onsen erff Nederlanden*, 'our hereditary Netherlands', but it is hard to imagine turning that into a battle-cry.[57]

War shaped identity, not only because one had to decide what one's own side was called, but also who were the enemy. Here again the Habsburgs gave their subjects a clear lead by blaming all wars on their enemies. Francis I and Henry II of France were regularly denounced for their breaches of treaties and truces, treacherous surprise attacks, pillaging and burning and unholy alliance with the Ottomans. This analysis seems to have been accepted by the intended audience. Plays at Bruges, poems at Mons, and even Christmas songs in the schools of Amsterdam heaped blame on the Valois kings.[58] Anonymous poems on Pavia followed Burgundian poetic traditions in turning their fire from the presumptuous Turk-loving Francis I to his 'proud nation / That claimed to surmount the world' and his army of cowardly braggarts.[59] Further north matters were less clear, because 'the enemies and disobedient people of Guelders' as they were known at 's-Hertogenbosch, were blamed for the rapacity of their raiders, but were acceptable as rebellious neighbours whose eventual submission to Charles V could be celebrated, even if their rulers were another matter.[60]

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[56] Bram Kempers, 'Assemblage van de Nederlandse leeuw. Politieke symboliek in heraldiek en verhalende prenten uit de zestiende eeuw', in *Openbaring en bedrog. De afbeelding als historische bron in de Lage Landen*, ed. Bram Kempers (Amsterdam, 1995), 77–81.

[57] Duke, 'Elusive Netherlands', 21; *Recueil des ordonnances*, V, 536–537, 541; VI, 127–128.

[58] Everaert, *Spelen*, 92–96, 551; *Le 'Livre de ballades' de Jehan et Charles Bocquet, bourgeois de Mons au XVI^e siècle*, ed. Armand Louant, Collection des anciens auteurs belges, nouvelle série 4 (Brussels, 1954), 52, 124–125, 151–159, 164–165; *Carmina scholastica amstelodamensia. A selection of sixteenth-century school songs from Amsterdam*, ed. Chris Heesakkers and Wilhelmina Kamerbeek (Leiden, 1984), 19, 54.

[59] Claude Thiry, 'L'honneur et l'Empire. À propos des poèmes de langue française sur la bataille de Pavie', in *Mélanges à la mémoire de Franco Simone. France et Italie dans la culture européenne*, 4 vols. (Geneva, 1980–1984), I, 297–324, at 298–299, 301.

[60] Petrus van Wissing, '"Kinders, ic weet secreet goet en rijkdom": Maarten van Rossem voor Leuven. Anti-Gelderse historieliederen uit het *Antwerps Liedboek* (1544)', in *Verdrag en tractaat van Venlo. Herdenkingsbundel, 1543–1993*, ed. Frank Keverling Buisman *et al.* (Hilversum, 1993), 235–246, at 237, 238, 243; Cornelius Aurelius, *Die cronycke van Hollandt, Zeelandt ende Vrieslant* (Antwerp, 1530), f. Bb5v; Stadsarchief 's-Hertogenbosch, nr. OA 3800; Macquéreau, *Chronicque*, 9, 18, 20; Lusy, *Journal*,

Netherlanders' self-identification was sharpened by the action the government required them to take against enemy aliens in wartime, reporting their goods for confiscation and their persons for deportation, unless they registered as long-term residents and swore loyalty to the Habsburgs. Numerous lawsuits show both the widespread implementation of these policies and the acrimony or confusion to which they gave rise.[61] Enforcement ranged from self-interestedly over-enthusiastic soldiers capturing and ransoming unfortunate 'rustics and others' who 'by ignorance, simplicity and failure to understand the said ordinance' had not registered themselves in time, to the self-interestedly under-enthusiastic: the schools of 's-Hertogenbosch did not want to lose profitable business by expelling all their pupils from Guelders.[62] Away from the battle lines, matters could be conducted calmly.[63] When invasion threatened, matters were more desperate. In March 1537 the French were given six days to leave Hainault; by the end of April, as spy fever spread, towns were under orders to question all those entering and leaving about their identity, movements and business.[64] In June 1542 at Antwerp, all those born subjects of William of Cleves, whether citizens of Antwerp or not, had to present themselves for registration within twenty-four hours. They had to swear loyalty to emperor, duchy and town and promise to reveal any threats to the town or Charles's other territories. They were not to receive any visitors from William's lands and were placed under curfew. Those who did not register were to be punished as rebels.[65] In marking Netherlanders off from the foreigners in their midst, war must have taught them something about their own identity.

Many of the aspects of war we have already considered were not unequivocal in consolidating a common identity for the Habsburgs' subjects in the Low Countries. But there were some ways in which war worked more clearly against the development of such identities.

29–30; Peter van Os, *Kroniek. Geschiedenis van 's-Hertogenbosch en Brabant van Adam tot 1523*, ed. A.M. van Lith-Droogleever Fortuijn *et al.*, Rijks geschiedkundige publicatiën, kleine serie 87 (Den Haag, 1997), 314; *'Livre de ballades'*, 114.

[61] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 310–312.

[62] *Recueil des ordonnances*, VI, 192–193, 218–219; Molius, *Kroniek van Molius*, 295.

[63] J. van Roey, 'De ordonnantie tegen de Fransen van 1551, en haar gevolgen te Antwerpen', *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis* 3rd series 3 (1951), 189–194; and 4 (1952), 23–29.

[64] *Recueil des ordonnances*, IV, 18–19, 24–25.

[65] Stadsarchief Antwerpen, nr. Pk 1560/2.

In some ways, it pandered to particularism. At the provincial level the tendency for States such as those of Holland to take control over the conduct of campaigns on land and sea repeatedly from the 1480s to the 1530s made war a matter of provincial self-defence and self-confidence.[66] In the more urbanised parts of the Netherlands, war in the first half of the period often felt as much like a struggle between individual towns as between dynastic or territorial units. Poets and chroniclers focussed on the rivalries of 's-Hertogenbosch with Zaltbommel and Tiel, the victories of loyal Antwerp over rebel Ghent and Sluis, or the taunts of Valenciennes, Ath and other towns that Tournai would be so destroyed that it would come to be called 'Tour n'ay', 'I have no tower'.[67]

Similarly, regular festivals to commemorate military events focussed attention on those of local significance. St Apollonia's day marked Hoorn's resistance to capture in 1479, St George's day Antwerp's capture of the blockhouse at Kallo in 1486, and from the end of our period Visitation day was remembered for Dunkirk's liberation in 1558. Victory trophies presented to local churches or displayed in town halls—standards, church bells, even relics—had a similar effect. The divisiveness of such commemoration was heightened by the way it often, as at Antwerp and Hoorn, recalled civil rather than external war.[68] The same was true of historical publication: in Zeeland bitter fighting against the troops and privateers of Sluis sixty years earlier permeated Jan Reygersbergh's chronicle of 1551. For newly conquered provinces, memories of conflict were fresher still. The Tournésiens remembered how the States of Flanders had pressed for their walls to be dismantled even after they had submitted to Charles V.[69] Utrecht had to send a pig to The Hague every year to be publicly mocked and slaughtered in commemoration of Holland's role in the annexation of 1528.[70]

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[66] H. Kokken, *Steden en staten. Dagvaarten van steden en staten van Holland onder Maria van Bourgondië en het eerste regentschap van Maximiliaan van Oostenrijk (1477–1494)*, Hollandse historische reeks 16 (The Hague, 1991), 196-199, 236–244; Ward, *Cities and states*, 126–133; Tracy, *Holland*, 85, 88–89, 105–114.

[67] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 316; Jehan Nicolay, *Kalendrier des guerres de Tournay (1477–1479)*, ed. F. Hennebert, 2 vols. (Tournai, 1853–1856), II, 15.

[68] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 316.

[69] Le Barre, *Journal*, 206–210.

[70] J. Pollmann, *Religious choice in the Dutch Republic. The reformation of Arnoldus Buchelius (1565–1641)* (Manchester, 1999), 121.

If particularism was one problem, cosmopolitanism was another. It would never be easy to exclude the enemy's point of view from an economy and a society as widely-connected as that of the Netherlands. About 1500 the dense urban network of the French borderlands provided pathways along which rhetoricians and their texts circulated. French Tournai in particular carried on a lively dialogue with the towns in Habsburg obedience. Between 1477–9 poems came in denouncing Louis XI's tyranny and celebrating Guinegatte, but poems went out mocking Maximilian.[71] The exchanges continued through the Flemish civil war and the Breton succession crisis. In 1511 the *Tournésiens* were at it again, putting on a play about uncatchable lapwings (*vanneaux*) to mock the Habsburg failure to take Venlo.[72]

Similar problems occurred in the north, as German news publications covered events in the Netherlands in ways unsympathetic to the Habsburgs. A panegyric on Charles's rival William of Cleves was even printed inside the Habsburg Netherlands, at Kampen in Overijssel, in 1539.[73] Visual material might be equally subversive. Prints of Jan of Leiden, the Anabaptist king of Münster, were circulating at Antwerp in 1536, and at times of conflict the many prints of foreign rulers available in the Netherlands may similarly have served to glorify the Habsburgs' enemies.[74] Even foreign coins could stimulate or be used to display dangerous loyalties. In November 1545 a Ghent innkeeper was fined for kissing a coin of John Frederick of Saxony three times before handing it over in change, telling his customers that the elector was a 'good evangelical'.[75] In such circumstances the Habsburgs could not be confident of their ability to frame the loyalties and identities of their subjects.

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[71] *Ville de Cambrai. Inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790*, ed. Edouard Gautier and André Lesort (Cambrai, 1907), 117–118, 122; *La grande procession de Tournai (1090–1992)*, ed. Jean Dumoulin and Jacques Pycke (Tournai, 1992), 43–47, 52–58 ; Nicolay, *Kalendrier*, II, 14–55.

[72] Macquéreau, *Chronicque*, 22, 40, 45.

[73] *Catalogus van de pamfletten-verzameling berustende in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, ed. Willem Knuttel, 9 vols. (The Hague, 1889–1920), I, nrs. 6, 41, 63, 89–90; *Nederlandsche bibliographie*, nrs. 3800, 3801.

[74] Jan van der Stock, *Printing images in Antwerp. The introduction of printmaking in a city: fifteenth century to 1585*, Studies in print and printmaking 2 (Rotterdam, 1998), 54; *Vorstenportretten uit de eerste helft van de 16de eeuw. Houtsneden als propaganda*, ed. D. de Hoop Scheffer and A.J. Klant-Vlielander Hein (Amsterdam, 1972), 13–14, 41–47, 49–50, 61, 63–64.

[75] Johan Decavele, *De dageraad van de Reformatie in Vlaanderen (1520–1565)*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1975), I, 257.

The presence of foreign soldiers in the Netherlands also had awkward effects on local identities. Germans and Spaniards served the Habsburgs in large numbers throughout our period and both had terrible reputations for mistreating the civilian population. As Jean Thieulaine, the Arras chronicler, put it, 'in the countryside the emperor's men pillaged and did everything enemies do, except that they did not burn the villages'.[76] Just as Netherlanders were invited by the Habsburgs to define themselves in opposition to the French, so they came from bitter experience to define themselves in opposition to the foreigners those Habsburgs sent to defend them. The problem was sharpened by the way in which foreign troops were repeatedly used to repress domestic dissent. Stereotypes of German rapacity and betrayal of the Burgundian legacy, exemplified by the reported boasts of German mercenaries that they had killed Charles the Bold, were particularly dangerous when those Germans served a Maximilian who might be thought of as a rapacious and unreliable German. Stereotypes of Spaniards who were 'presumptuous and vainglorious' or 'above all intractable and unbearable, behaving in a town in a superior manner' were particularly dangerous when those Spaniards served a Philip who might be thought of as an intractable and tyrannous Spaniard, planning to use his Spanish troops to keep his native subjects in 'perpetual servitude'.[77]

The effects of war on religion were equally unsettling for the Habsburgs' vision of a united and obedient Netherlands. In 1559 Philip complained that religious deviance had increased 'by means of the late wars, the heretics and those erring from our holy faith and religion, having used this opportunity to spread their errors and poison'.[78] This happened in many ways. The social and spiritual disenchantment bred by the strains of war from the 1530s to the 1550s provided fertile ground for the spread of unorthodoxy in both the southern and northern provinces, especially perhaps the Anabaptist pacifism of David Joris and Menno Simons. War may also have inured soldiers to the destruction of holy things. In the devastating campaigns of the 1550s, the Habsburg forces regularly destroyed churches and

[76] 'Un livre de raison en Artois (XVI[e] siècle). Extraits historiques', ed. X. de Gorguette d'Argœuves, *Mémoires de la Société des antiquaires de La Morinie* 21 (1881), 191.

[77] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*, 299–302; Lusy, *Journal*, 188; Archives Municipales de Douai, nr. EE 99; B. de Troeyer, *Lamoraal van Egmont. Een critische studie over zijn rol in de jaren 1559–1564 in verband met het schuldvraagstuk* (Brussels, 1961), 50.

[78] *Recueil des ordonnances*, VII, 507–510.

religious houses. It may be no coincidence that it was in 1558 that harsh legislation against thefts from churches was first found necessary in the Netherlands.[79]

War was a dynamic force in early modern Europe, affecting most critically those engaged in fighting or inhabitants of combat zones, but also all the subjects of states increasingly ambitious in mobilising societies for conflict. War had the power to shape identities of all sorts, including many we have not considered here: the nobility of nobles, the manliness of men, and so on. Yet in the formation of political identities, war was not a simple force driving change in a single direction. In many ways it did bring the inhabitants and the provinces of the Low Countries together; together under their princes, together behind the Burgundian cause, together against the French, and even together in one 'fatherland'. That fatherland was given some imaginative shape by the humanist conception of a *patria* recurrent in legislation, some political shape by the need to cooperate to survive in 1542–3 and some constitutional shape by the Pragmatic Sanction and, less convincingly, the States General. In other respects, however, war undermined these tendencies towards the coagulation of large identities, encouraging particularism, political dissidence and religious diversity.

The result was bewilderingly, if fascinatingly, complex. That complexity is emphasised by a comparison with England of the sort David Grummitt, Hans Cools and I have recently attempted.[80] In England, the prototypical national state, long consolidated and comparatively centralised, there was much less potential for local or regional loyalties to run counter to national ones. Regions would revolt against royal authority and sometimes did so under the pressure of taxation for war, but their main aim was to redirect royal policy towards the nation as a whole rather than to assert their own particular liberties. Religious change and national defence were more easily made to run together in the early stages of a process of Protestant confessionalisation. A national self-image forged in the Hundred Years War and a political agenda shaped by the dynastic confusion of the Wars of the Roses meant that the biggest celebrations in English towns were reserved

[79] Fernand Vanhemelryck, *De criminaliteit in de ammanie van Brussel van de late Middeleeuwen tot het einde van het Ancien Régime (1404–1789)* (Brussels, 1981), 190.
[80] Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, state and society*.

not for peace treaties, but for victories in France and the births of royal heirs. Prosecutions of traitors, for aiding the French or the Scots in wartime, were very rare compared with those for plots or rebellions in favour of the Yorkists or the pope. In Tudor terms, indeed, it was Ireland, with its complex spectra of culture, language, civility and political allegiance, its contested and incomplete reformation and its repeated border warfare, revolts and constitutional wrangles that better resembled the Netherlands.[81] The Habsburgs recognised that fact when they tried repeatedly to exploit divisions in Ireland to distract the Tudors from exploiting divisions in the Netherlands, as they saw it, in the generations after 1566. Perhaps Philip II understood more clearly the difference between the kingdoms of England and Ireland he had ruled for four years than he ever did the frustrating complexities of political identity in his Netherlands provinces; perhaps after our investigations we can sympathise a little more with his confusion.

[81] Steven Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors. English expansion and the end of Gaelic rule* (London, 1998); Ciaran Brady, *The chief governors. The rise and fall of reform government in Tudor Ireland, 1536–1588* (Cambridge, 1994).

CHAPTER EIGHT

WAR PROPAGANDA, LITERATURE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN RENAISSANCE FRANCE, C. 1490–1560

David Potter

By the end of the Middle Ages, a complex set of ideas, partly historical, partly mythological, had developed in France to bolster its identity as a monarchical state with distinct characteristics and extensive claims. By the fourteenth century at the latest, as Colette Beaune has shown, a distinctive 'royal' ideology had been formed which emphasised monarchical and divinely-sanctioned legitimacy. Concurrently, the wars with the English in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had nourished, both among the nobility and the towns, the idea of a 'French nation'.[1] The Wars of Religion generated, from about 1560, a new field for public opinion in the form of pamphlet literature on the role of the state.[2] Though it has been argued that the formation of an articulate public opinion in France only began in that period and did not mature until the eighteenth century, the exercise of power in the Renaissance period was always, as Andrew Pettegree has aptly put it, 'persuasive.'[3] The aim of this paper is to show how, in the course of the Italian and Habsburg wars, some of the elements of national identity developed in France, made necessary by galvanising resources for war. It was a national identity which in the literary world is symbolised by the concluding paean of praise of France in Joachim du Bellay's *Deffence et Illustration* of 1549.

When Gaspard de Coligny drew up his infantry regulations for the multi-national French army in 1550, he prescribed severe punishment for a quarreler in the ranks who used his national identity to stir up

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[1] Colette Beaune, *Naissance de la nation France* (Paris, 1985), 207–29, 310–23; D. Potter, *A History of France, 1460–1560: the Emergence of a Nation State* (London, 1995), 17–28.

[2] M. Yardeni, *La conscience nationale en France pendant les guerres de religion, 1559–1598* (Leuven/Paris, 1971).

[3] A. Pettegree, *The French book and the European book world* (Leiden, 2007), 20.

trouble ('donnera le cry d'une Nation').[4] Unlike the Netherlands, France, of course, was an explicitly 'absolute' monarchy in which 'nationality' was defined by allegiance to the king. The power to wage war was quite clearly a royal prerogative. This raises the question of public opinion and its interaction with the making of policy, so important a feature of the complex political world of the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands. Though in France there was a network of assemblies of estates and urban self government, the points at which this could intersect with high policy were very rare. While certain treaties in this period stipulated ratification by provincial estates (for example Etaples, 1492), by 1527 the participation of the Estates of Burgundy in the rejection of the treaty of Madrid was evidently stage-managed. It is a commonplace that the foreign policies of such states, in the much-used image, 'machines built…for the battlefield', were the prerogatives of princes and that decisions of peace and war were taken by rulers without consulting their subjects.[5] In a strictly legal sense this was true, though the medieval conventions of governance by 'good counsel' assumed that rulers would take the advice of their nobles and commanders before committing themselves to war.

Though we now know more about the propaganda of medieval French kings, the Renaissance is still usually held to be the domain of swaggering princes who laid down the law to their subjects. Kings and princes in that era, though, far from conducting 'wars of magnificence' solely for the sake of honour and with sovereign disdain for subjects' opinions, were acutely aware of the need both to justify their wars and present them in such a light that their subjects would understand their motives and offer enthusiastic support. They, after all, were required to pay for them. Even Président Guillart, in his edgy speech before the king in the *lit de justice* of 24 July 1527, asserted that 'since the people pay the wages of the men-at-arms' the king should take order for military discipline.[6] Marshal Brissac declared in 1551 that 'war is the concern not only of the person of the king, his realms and estates, but also of us his subjects, friends and allies'; French seigneurs 'went

[4] Jean du Bouchet, *Preuves de l'histoire de l'illustre maison de Coligny* (Paris, 1662), 458.

[5] See David Potter *Renaissance France at war: Armies, Culture and Society, c. 1480–1560* (Woodbridge, 2008), 255–7; Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the absolute state* (London, 1974), 32.

[6] Speech of Charles Guillart quoted in R. Knecht, 'Francis I and the "lit de justice". A "legend" defended', *French history* 7 (1993), 53–83, at 67, 82.

to war for their honour willingly and gaily to serve their prince and their *patrie*'. His biographer Villars, though, also added that common people should not suffer 'for the quarrels of princes'.[7]

Presentation of policy involved direct pressure and influence through the fiscal apparatus, and also interaction with educated opinion, the subject of this paper. This involved a subtle and complex relationship with the literary world through unspoken conventions and overt control of the press, as well as the employment of more obvious means of persuasion and presentation. The identification of opinion in a country like France in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries is notoriously difficult and involves for present purposes works of literature and history. A few general remarks, though, may indicate the range of information exchange in matters of public policy. In December 1512, the bishop of Amiens invited the mayor and *échevins* to dinner at the episcopal palace and, after some *bonne chère*, told them that he had just heard from his father, the provincial governor, that 'the pope, the emperor, the king of Spain and the king of England had allied against the king our sovereign lord' and that the town should take measures for defence.[8] At Narbonne in January 1528, the release of the pope from captivity was marked by processions, tournaments and *feux de joye* and in the evening artillery fire, so that the Spanish garrison at Salses should know, 'that there isn't a peasant in France who doesn't say that the king has delivered the pope from the hands of the Jews'.[9] There were, of course, many formal and informal channels of communication for news which have not left much trace. The most visible remain the royal missives by which the crown kept the local communities informed of such matters as were thought proper or necessary. Before the generalization of the provincial *gouvernements* as agencies for the management of provincial aspirations, the crown was more apt to send letters to the *bonnes villes*, the *bailliages* and powerful individuals in order to mobilise support. In more informal terms, grandees, generals and ordinary noblemen kept their families and communities informed of the progress of military campaigns. This sort of exchange ran alongside an explosion of information available through the nascent press in the form of pamphlets (usually called

[7] Boyvin de Villars, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Buchon (Paris, 1836), 517, 539–540.
[8] Amiens, Archives Communales, nr. BB21, f. 163.
[9] *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, ed. C. de Vic and J. Vaissette, 16 vols. (Toulouse, 1872–1905), XII, 442.

plaquettes) that reported military campaigns, the printed summaries of peace treaties and the regular manifestos attached to demands for taxation through the normal machinery of collection. Local communities were abundantly informed of the ostensible reasons for war and the progress of military campaigns.

Much of the public information available was in the form of printed royal declarations or reports of military campaigns.[10] This was nothing new under Francis I. The printing of treaties had begun in the 1490s. These were often judiciously edited for public consumption, as the text of the treaty of Etaples with Henry VII makes clear. The treaties with the Swiss (1516) and that of Perpetual Peace with England in 1527 were printed, as was the joint manifesto of Francis and Henry VIII to challenge the emperor. The treaty of Cambrai was also published as was that of Cateau-Cambrésis. For some treaties only the general provisions were printed, such as those of Crépy (1544) and Boulogne (1550).[11] Even if the full texts of treaties were not printed (as with case of the treaty of Madrid) the terms were sometimes widely known, as chronicle evidence shows.

The formal periodical press did not start in France until the *Gazette* of 1631 but before that the Wars of Religion gave an immense boost to current affairs publication. The years from 1490 to 1560, though, have been credibly described as ones in which print media gave rise to a real sense of popular journalism.[12] This took many different forms. At least 365 anonymous news publications involving pamphlets (often illustrated) of up to eight octavo pages have been identified for the period 1498 to 1559 and there were undoubtedly more, as recent discoveries make clear.[13] This does not take account of longer reflective works or others for which a writer can be identified, while poetry can also be seen as a form of commentary on public events. There is, indeed, good evidence for a concerted printed propaganda campaign conducted by the French state from the beginning of the Italian Wars

[10] *Les sources de l'histoire de France. Le seizième siècle*, ed. Henri Hauser, 2 vols. (Paris, 1906), I, 14–15; *Le catalogue de l'histoire de France*, 12 vols. (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 1855–1895), I, Lb28– Lb31. This shows a concentration of *plaquettes* in the periods 1543–1544, 1552–1553 and 1558–1559.

[11] Bibliotheque nationale, *Catalogue*, I, Lb^{28}, nr. 1; Réserve imprimés, f. 164 (2); *Sources*, nr. 1101; BN Res.impr., f. 173 (3).

[12] J.-P. Séguin, *L'information en France de Louis XII à Henri II* (Geneva, 1961), 1–53.

[13] Pettegree, *The French book*, 23.

in 1494.[14] These started with official bulletins published by the government in late November 1494,[15] Charles VIII's manifesto at Florence,[16] documents on the negotiations with the pope and the king's entry into Rome, many of them incorporating letters from members of the royal entourage or the king himself.[17] The capture of Naples was publicised in the form of a series of letters from the king to the duke of Bourbon, while other events covered were Charles VIII's coronation at Naples, his return and the battle of Fornovo.[18] One feature of this period is the co-existence of the well-established means of communication through duplicates of royal circular letters in manuscript and printed bulletins. Indeed, as the *Cronique du Roy Françoys* shows, as late as the 1540s royal circular letters continued to be disseminated in manuscript.[19]

There were even more narratives of events designed to bolster the royal position, including many *plaquettes* which put a favourable gloss on Lautrec's ultimately doomed expedition to Italy and others accompanying Francis I's defiance of 1528. The return of the royal children and Queen Eleanor's reception in 1530–31 were amply covered,[20] as were the emperor's Provence campaign of 1536, the Nice and Aigues Mortes meetings of 1538 and Charles's visit to France in 1540. The 1530s and 1540s thus saw a burst of contemporary printed narratives on foreign affairs.[21] Other peaks of publishing activity came with the successful Ceresole and Metz campaigns of 1544 and 1552–3.

The 1530s also saw numerous formal declarations involving foreign policy, several penned by Guillaume du Bellay. After the Placards Affair in 1534–1535 justifications were needed in Germany for the killing of Protestants while the envoys of the Turks were flaunting themselves at Paris.[22] The war with the emperor in 1536 also stimulated further

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[14] J. de la Pilorgerie, *Campagne et bulletins de la grande armée d'Italie commandé par Charles VIII, 1494–1495* (Nantes/Paris, 1866).

[15] *Ibid.*, 84–90.

[16] *Ibid.,* 101–103.

[17] *Ibid.*, 144–158.

[18] *Ibid.,* 176–181, 192–200, 200–205, 207–217, 260–263, 274–279, 450–453, 301–304, 309–314.

[19] See [S. Picotté], *Cronique du roy Françoys, premier de ce nom*, ed. G. Guiffrey (Paris, 1860), 252–253; Bibliothèque nationale, fonds français 3088, f. 56.

[20] *Sources*, nr. 1110–1118, 1132–1133.

[21] Pettegree, *The French book*, chapter 2 passim.

[22] Francis I's letter to the estates of the Empire (drafted by G. du Bellay). See V.L. Bourrilly, *Guillaume du Bellay, seigneur de Langey, 1491–1543* (Paris, 1905), 189–190.

campaign reporting. War with the emperor in 1536 was justified in du Bellay's manifesto of the French case written for German consumption.[23] 1542 saw the publication of Francis I's case against the emperor along with the French declaration of war.[24] Even Henry VIII's declaration of war in 1543 was published at Rouen.[25]

I

How was the informed non-political observer to make sense of or write about war in public policy? One way was through contemporary published history. The inherited mode of history writing in France was the great chronicle tradition that passed into print in the closing years of the fifteenth century. The generation of about 1500 was still able to practise the contradictory notions of subscribing to fanciful and *fabuleux* notions of the distant Trojan origins while seeking to deploy careful contemporary historical reportage.[26] The chronicles published by Robert Gaguin or the anonymous recensions of the *Mer des histoires,* printed from 1488 onwards, saw the history of France as a continuum from the story of the Bible right through the deeds of the fifty-seven kings who reigned up to the time of Francis I. The impact of printing was crucial, in that it encouraged the mutation of the chronicle into a contemporary commentary, a history brought increasingly up to date by a description of current affairs.

The reign of Francis I, then, saw the last stage of the great French chronicle tradition in the form of regional annals in which contemporary history formed the final and vital part. Some of the most revealing began life as chronicles of provinces which their authors expanded into national chronicles in their own times. One of these was Jean de Bourdigné, whose *Histoire agrégative* of 1529 began as a history of Anjou but became a commentary of public events in France as a whole from the start of the sixteenth century. Jean Bouchet first published his *Annales d'Aquitaine* in 1524 but expanded it into a contemporary history several times from 1532 onwards until his final edition

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[23] *Catalogue*, I, Lb30, nr. 65c and 64.
[24] *Ibid.*, I, Lb30, nr. 86.
[25] *Sources*, nr. 1219.
[26] R.E. Asher, *National myths in renaissance France. Francus, Samothes and the Druids* (Edinburgh, 1993), 13.

in 1557.[27] This is one of the best-informed chronicles of the period, which in its final edition indicates a degree of inside information about both the court and war; Bouchet obviously had connections in government and politics by the 1550s. What is more, he was widely read and plagiarised.[28] Like most of his contemporaries, Bouchet firmly subscribed to the Trojan myth while proving a careful contemporary historian.[29] The *Annales* are unusually detailed on certain military campaigns and we know that Bouchet drew much of his material from discussions with soldiers, as had Froissart.

On matters of high policy, while Bouchet was not exactly uncritical of Francis I, he did not depart from the official orthodoxy that the wars of the era are the emperor's responsibility.[30] It was a war 'that has led to so many others' and Charles had been 'it was said, happy to have found a pretext to make war in France'. 'So then commenced the time of tears and grief because of the injustices, exactions and other troubles since come to pass in France'.[31] In 1535–6, he wrote, the emperor had achieved 'a glorious act and worthy of a king before men' in taking Tunis from the Sultan and restoring its rightful king, 'but I don't know about God, for I believe the king of Tunis is an infidel'.[32] Francis I had behaved honourably by not pursuing his attack on Piedmont during this war but the emperor met with 'excuses and dissimulation'; the emperor was determined on war and just dragged out talks over Savoy 'to divert the king'. The emperor's visit to France in 1539 was more magnificent than that of a king but the world was puzzled by the outcome, 'considering that it was just three years since the emperor had boasted that he would make the king of France the poorest gentleman in his kingdom'.

By 1551 Bouchet could easily emphasise the pattern of Habsburg aggression and, like others in the period (Paradin for example), he stresses the role of France in rescuing the 'liberties of Germany'. His introduction to the 1551 war consists of an indictment of the emperor's tyrannical actions in Germany which, undertaken in the name of religion, were in reality 'to make himself the sole ruler of all

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[27] Jean Bouchet, *Les annales d'Aquitaine* (Poitiers, 1557).
[28] J. Britnell, *Jean Bouchet* (Edinburgh, 1986), 121–122.
[29] Asher, *National myths*, 19.
[30] Britnell, *Jean Bouchet*, 137, 139.
[31] Bouchet, *Annales*, f. 206r–v.
[32] *Ibid.*, f. 275v.

Christendom'. In translating the king's letter to the German estates, Bouchet makes the standard French case against the emperor: Henri II had wanted peace and to settle the conflicts of his neighbours in England and Scotland, and Charles V had done all he could to frustrate this by deception and trickery. The German estates had appealed to him against the emperor's desire to reduce them to 'perpetual servitude' in the guise of reuniting the Church and resisting the Turks.[33]

The process by which these views of foreign affairs could be absorbed and transmitted is illustrated by the well-known *Cronique du Roy Françoys*, unpublished at the time and heavily plagiarised in content, probably compiled in 1542–3 by an *échevin* of Sens named Sébastien Picotté.[34] For much of the period from 1521–28 he simply reproduces the chronicles of Bouchet (in the 1532 or 1535 editions), Bourdigné, echoes of the popular *La Mer des Hystoires*, sometimes with the occasional anti-Spanish remark. His narrative of Pavia is lifted entirely from Bourdigné, though with the addition of the comforting note that God had not permitted the enemy to take advantage and invade the kingdom[35] and generally adding expressions that testify to a much more anti-Imperial and anti-Spanish sentiment than Bourdigné showed. The conclusion of the treaty of Madrid is attributed to the hard work of Louise of Savoy, again following Bourdigné's narrative word for word, except for a personal comment that the emperor was 'so rude and uncompromising, demanding such unreasonable and exorbitant things contrary to equity that he made it clear he did not want seriously to negotiate'.[36] He copies Bourdigné's remarks about the dismay at the sending of the king's sons to Spain, adding his own comment 'everyone feared Spanish unreliability which already seemed portended by signs, wonders and earthquakes' and other unaccustomed storms.[37] For the rest of his chronicle, Picotté depends heavily on contemporary news-reporting.

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[33] *Ibid.*, f. 276r–v, 284r, 351v, 352v–355r.

[34] H. Hauser, 'Étude critique sur La cronique du roy Françoys, premier de ce nom', *Revue de la Renaissance* 8 (1907), 49–63.

[35] Hauser, 'Étude critique', 46.

[36] Jean de Bourdigné, *Hystoire agrégative des annalles et cronicques d'Anjou* (Angers/Paris, 1529), f. 204v; *Cronique du roy Françoys*, 48–49.

[37] *Ibid.*, f. 204v–205r; *Cronique du roy Françoys*, 50.

II

The writing of true contemporary history, which sought to understand events, was of increasing importance by the mid-sixteenth century. In 1540, Etienne Dolet brought out the first edition in French of his history of the reign of Francis I, the *Gestes*.[38] Dolet's historical horizon is provided by the reverses of the wars of 1512–13, which in a sense set the scene for the problems he addresses, notably the experience of defeat. Thus, while the earlier parts of his history contain passages from the Bourdigné/*Mer des histoires* tradition[39] they are larded with reflections on the faithlessness of the Italians in abandoning their loyalty to France or exaggerating the role of Bourbon and ill-fortune at Pavia.[40] As did most chroniclers and poets of the time, including Rabelais, Dolet blamed the king's defeat at Pavia on treason.

Dolet's work is also one of the first contemporary histories to sum up the reign. Dolet was not primarily an historian and like many others he was a cut and paste writer, but he also had an idea, to which his original Latin title, *Fata*, points. He had already expressed the view that the military life was dishonourable and that 'there is no art in war, everything is done by chance. You will see no war waged as it should be by prudent plan'.[41] At Lyon, he had in fact been accused of heresy for suggesting that human actions were the plaything of fortune. His understanding of causes is vital, especially as he was faced by the difficult task of writing the history of his king's military failures. Despite the king's 'prudence and good execution', 'all his misfortunes in certain of his wars' have stemmed from a destiny that stood above all human power. The king was a ruler of great spirit, who was advised by counsellors of good mind. The kingdom of France was lavishly endowed with people, revenues and trade. 'How then has it happened that the entire world was not conquered by this king or at least the glory of Spain cast down?' The answer was destiny, 'joined with Mars God of war,' the eternal order of things, the daughter of God who causes all things good or bad 'by the infallible will of God'.[42]

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[38] *Les Gestes de Francoys de Valois Roy de France* (Lyon, 1540).
[39] *Ibid.*, 37–38; compare Bourdigné, *Hystoire*, f. 195v–196r; *Gestes* (1540), 43–44, compare Bourdigné, *Hystoire*, f. 203r.
[40] *Les Gestes de Francoys*, (1540), 39, 44–48.
[41] *L'avant-naissance de Claude Dolet* (Lyon, 1539; repr. Paris, 1830), 18.
[42] *Les Gestes de Francoys* (1540), 3–14, 20.

The most interesting part of Dolet's historical writing, though, came in the 1543 edition of the *Gestes* in which the third book brought the history up to the end of 1542. This was distinctly contemporary history, written at a time when Dolet was seriously menaced by accusations of heresy. He had already been pardoned once by the king and was to be arrested in early 1544 and executed for heresy in August 1546 after a brief escape at Lyon. How then, did Dolet seek to ingratiate himself with the king during this crisis? The answer is: with a truculent mixture of chauvinism and criticism of royal policy. He had finished his previous edition with the truce of Nice and now took up his story of the emperor's visit to France, after which 'the French made no move and did nothing memorable. It seems to me that the fault on our side was great here…for there was then a great opportunity'. The argument that France should not have attacked the emperor while he was on crusade against the infidel at Algiers showed 'the fine restraint of some scholar in his study; or to put it better, the stupid opinion of the ignorant or of malicious pro-imperialists who aimed to cover the deceits and wiles of the emperor with idle pretexts (*se couvrir d'un sac mouillé*)'. The emperor's main objective was the security of Spain and, once he had achieved this, his intention was 'to make the cruelest and sharpest war on the French that he could'. The emperor, to cover himself, had spread the rumour that the French were no more than 'half Turks' themselves, (alluding of course to the Franco-Turkish alliance). Dolet denounces the emperor's claims as 'the greatest idiocies one could come up with'. This was a major presentational problem for French policy from the 1530s onwards. Dolet develops a fully secular view of the problem: 'is it forbidden to a prince to make an alliance and understanding with another, whatever belief or law he subscribes to?…These are [a] prince's chief means to make his subjects rich and himself powerful over their wealth when necessity demands'. Furthermore, everyone knew that the Spaniards were nothing but Moors 'and if thus it is, God knows Mr Spaniard is rather thin skinned to make such a fuss about understanding with the Turks'.[43] Dolet recurs to his earlier analysis of the manifold strengths of France and suggests that its failure to dominate Christendom was due to the fact that the 'order and conduct' of the kingdom did not correspond to them. While the emperor was at Algiers, Francis kept his word 'even

[43] *Ibid.*, 83, 84–85.

though it is clear enough to all what wrong the emperor was doing him'.[44] Finally, the failure at the siege of Perpignan was the result of the way the siege was conducted. So, while Dolet praises the honour and bravery of the king, he is less than complimentary about the execution of his policy. Unsurprisingly, the pleas he made to the king for his freedom in the *Second Enfer* of 1544 fell on deaf ears.

While Dolet was writing his history, his friend, the Lyonnais Guillaume Paradin, was also trying to make sense of contemporary history, though initially on a smaller scale. Early in 1544 he published a brief pamphlet on the reasons for the war which had broken out in 1542. It states the publicly acceptable view of these events and reveals the extent to which wild allegations were used to drum up support in time of war. First came the emperor's deceptions in 1539, described as 'more useful to himself than honest'. Then his murder of the French envoys Rincon and Fregoso revealed the deception and brought to Francis' mind the death of the Dauphin in 1536 'poisoned by the emperor's unheard of malice'. Finally, the emperor had in previous years sent 'incendiaries' into France who, had they not been caught, would have spread havoc throughout the kingdom.[45]

By 1550, when he published the French translation of his history of his times, Paradin was more judicious and perhaps more aware of religious dimensions in princely conflict. Beginning his narrative of the wars between king and emperor with the quarrel over Sedan in 1521, he judged that, as a result of this, 'these two princes, fearing the *desdain* and contempt of the other and both wanting to make themselves great, were the cause of great evils and troubles to the great advantage of the enemies of our holy religion'.[46] By 1550 the emperor was leading the struggle against the German Protestants and Francis I was dead.

The *Continuation* of this History published in 1556 developed a more sophisticated analysis of the reasons for the war, which had begun in 1551, based on contemporary royal declarations. Significantly, he headed this 'The Austrasian war for the restoration of Germanic liberties' and provides a retrospective look at Franco-Imperial relations since 1547. Unsurprisingly, the starting point was, on the one hand,

[44] Etienne Dolet, *Les Gestes du Roy Francoys de Valois, Roy de France* (edition of 1543), 86, 89.
[45] Guillaume Paradin, *Le discours des guerres du Roy et de Lempereur* (Paris, 1544), 2.
[46] Guillaume Paradin, *Histoire de nostre temps* (Lyon, 1550), 10.

Henri II's desire for peace, horror of war and efforts to maintain his treaties with the emperor; and on the other Charles's thorough untrustworthiness. Ultimately, he stresses the emperor's 'desire to aggrandise himself'. These, then, were the reasons that impelled the French king to respond to the desire of the princes of the Empire for protection by concluding a close alliance with them.[47] This 'line' is a clear one from all the contemporary memoir writers as well.

III

Another approach to judging the resonance of royal propaganda is through the literary world. For example, when Rabelais published *Gargantua* at Lyon in 1535, the year of Charles V's expedition to Tunis, he included some oblique yet telling mockery of the emperor in the figure of Picrochole and of chivalric war in general in the Picrocholine war, fought over a quarrel between Grandgousier's shepherds and the cake-bakers (*fouaciers*) of Lerné. When Grandgousier offers peace, Picrochole is implacable and Grandgousier sends an agent to negotiate and deliver a harangue in favour of peace: 'Où est foy ? Où est loy ? Où est raison ? Où est humanité?'[48] In the prologue to the *Quart Livre* of 1552 Rabelais described Charles as 'this little crippled man' who had subjugated the liberties of the Germans.[49] Yet he was not simply a propagandist for the king of France in the service of the du Bellays. He tended to plough his own furrow and was distinctly cool about Francis I's obsession with the duchy of Milan.[50] Pichrochole is lampooned nevertheless as a ruler who sees himself as a new Alexander, a conceit Grandgousier mocks as blasphemous.[51] The comic setting of the war as a parody of chivalric romance is appropriate to the satire of Charles's chivalric dreams of establishing a new Christian empire. Picrochole's overweening ambition and the foolishness of his counsellors are lavishly exposed. Once Picrochole has been defeated, Gargantua makes the allusion to Charles V's supposed

[47] Guillaume Paradin, *Continuation de l'Histoire de nostre temps: jusques à l'an mille cinq-cens cinquante-six* (Lyon, 1556), 5–7, 8–9, 10–11.
[48] François Rabelais, *Gargantua*, ed. M. Screech and R. Calder (Geneva, 1970), 185.
[49] *Œuvres de François Rabelais*, ed. A. Lefranc *et al.*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1912–1955), VI (*Le quart livre*), 38–39.
[50] N. Aronson, *Les idées politiques de Rabelais* (Paris, 1973), 135–138.
[51] M.A. Screech, *Rabelais* (London, 1979), 165.

harsh treatment of Francis I after Pavia perfectly clear. Yet Rabelais puts into the mouth of the outrageous toper, gourmand and warrior monk, Frère Jean des Entommeures ('mince-meat'), the declamation against the *fuyars de Pavye* threatening to turn them into docked-tailed dogs: 'Why didn't they die there rather than leave their good prince in such dire straights?' he asks.[52]

Rabelais's second book presents a humanist vision of French policy, perhaps that of his patron Jean du Bellay: the use of diplomacy to avert war, armed force in a just cause and only in extremes, the exercise of mercy in victory. The picrocholine war seeks to legitimise war but only in terms of Christian humanism.[53] The emperor is firmly cast as a malignant figure whose megalomaniacal ambition for world domination leads him to ruin (a constant theme of French propaganda in this period). The book was published at a time when Charles, conqueror of Tunis, seemed to stand on the verge of recovering Constantinople if not Jerusalem. This was not a development that could be viewed with zeal in a France still smarting under the humiliation of Pavia and the loss of Milan, the treaties of Madrid and Cambrai.[54] However, Rabelais's satire at the expense of Charles V is in effect part of a critique of the waste and foolishness of war in general.

Through Rabelais, we can start to understand some of the limits of literary polemic in the service of political power. Rabelais's story illustrates two themes connecting the waging of war and the need to mobilise opinion: the role of the literary figure in the Renaissance as both hierophant and critic of wars of magnificence; the satire of France's enemies (in the interests of the French crown) and a certain critique of war which was not uncommon in literary circles during this period, though often couched in extremely oblique terms. This was very much the case with some of the satirical writing of the period and points up the difficulty of knowing how far 'war propaganda' actually influenced opinion and whether there was indeed such a thing as public opinion in this period.

Printing gave a further purchase to the intellectual critique of war that developed from the medieval just war doctrine and the exploration

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[52] Rabelais, *Gargantua*, 224–225.

[53] Paul Chilton, 'Humanism and war in Rabelais and Montaigne', in *War, literature and the arts in sixteenth-century Europe*, ed. J.R. Mulryne and M. Shewring (London, 1989), 119–143, at 122.

[54] Rabelais, *Gargantua*, 194.

of ancient texts. It would be useful to know how widely disseminated the Erasmian texts *Dulce bellum inexpertis* and *Querela pacis* were.[55] There was no separate edition of the *Querela* in France after 1530. By 1559 and after the placing of Erasmus's works on the Index, his very name was an obstacle and they seem to have been little read in the later century. Indeed, the *Querela* was not fully translated into French until 1924. We know, though, that Louis de Berquin's lost translation of the *Querela* was condemned in 1526 and when edited translations did appear later in the century they cut out attacks on the clergy and some of Erasmus's strictures about war with the Turks. The first reasonably close adaptation in French had to await Charles Sevin's *Complainte de la paix* of 1570. In this case, Erasmus's conception of war as a civil war within Christendom was peculiarly suitable for the circumstances of 1569.

However, other cases serve to illustrate the wide range of earlier Erasmian influences, including Clichtove's, *De Bello et pace opusculum* at Paris in 1523, Claude Colet's *L'oraison de Mars aux dames de la Court*, published in 1544 to celebrate the peace of Crépy. Guillaume Aubert's speech, *Oraison de paix* of 1559, was written to celebrate the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in a work which indicates that, though we are often told that the nobility greeted that peace with dismay, the literary world seems almost ecstatic. Aubert's own contribution is the rather whimsical idea for arbitration between princes and the deposition of those who refuse to submit to it.

The other side of the picture is represented by Erasmus's contemporary Guillaume Budé, whose *Institution du Prince*, though influenced by Erasmus, is only a pale reflection of Erasmian pacifism. The works of French humanists, though they may have paid tribute to Erasmus, tended, to 'evaporate into patriotic enthusiasm' when, as in 1521, they were confronted by real war. Thus Budé's letters of 1521 exulted in French successes against invaders, while French aggression was played down.[56] Rabelais himself is far from being a straightforward Erasmian pacifist, despite Grandgousier's offer of peace talks in chapters 26–27 of *Gargantua*. Indeed, the limits of his pacifism are clear in the prologue and chapter 1 of the *Tiers Livre* of 1542 (pub.1546), written as

[55] James Hutton, 'Erasmus and France. The propaganda for peace', *Studies in the Renaissance* 8 (1961), 103–127.

[56] Chilton, 'Humanism and war', 121; A.C. Keller, 'Anti-war writing in France 1500–1560', *Publications of the Modern language association* 67 (1952), 240–250.

part of French justifications for the occupation of Piedmont, in which war appears as 'the father of all good things' though qualified by ambiguity and obscurity. The ambiguity is still more evident in the passages dealing with the human drive to master the world in the *Quart livre*.[57]

Literary works often exploited the horrors of war but seldom stepped beyond a publicly acceptable view of foreign policy. However, to regard them as simply one-sided propaganda would be simplistic. Their scope for comment, in a society which regarded the handling of relations with foreign princes as beyond public discussion, was limited, although Jean d'Auton wrote a lengthy poem on the failures and inadequacies of the Garigliano campaign as did Pierre Gringore.[58]

Problems of patronage led leading poets to be careful. Conclusions of treaties were an opportunity for extravagant effusions on peace. Among the *Chants* of Clément Marot published in his 1544 edition but circulating before that, the main dynastic events were celebrated.[59] When the emperor came to France in 1539, Marot followed the current conceit of likening him to a new Julius Caesar, come to Gaul this time in peace.[60] Satires (*coqs-à-l'âne*) enabled writers, on the other hand, to express certain truths that were impossible to convey in any other way or were too sensitive.[61] The *coq-à-l'âne* also provided a mode of poetic expression which enabled the reader to construe them in a sense critical of established orthodoxies. As a courtier, of course, Marot was expected to express conventional aristocratic ideas of war, and in his *Epistre* of 1521, to Marguerite of Angoulême, he depicted the assembled French armies in conventional terms.[62] In a letter of late 1521 to Marguerite, though, Marot lamented the desolation 'by reciprocal vengeance' of the fields of northern France by the enemy.[63] Marot, of course, had been enrolled in his youth as a clerk in the

[57] Rabelais, *Œuvres*, VI (*Le quart livre*), chapter 61–62.

[58] Jean d'Auton, *Chroniques de Louis XII*, ed. R. de Maulde la Clavière, 4 vols. (Paris, 1889–1895), III, 340–346; Pierre Gringore, *Les folles entreprises*, in Pierre Gringore, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. A. de Montaiglon and C. d'Héricault, 2 vols. (Paris, 1858), I, 31.

[59] Clément Marot, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. A. Grenier, 2 vols. (Paris, 1951), I, 368, 381, 383.

[60] *Ibid.*, I, 385–386.

[61] C.E. Kinch, *La poésie satirique de Clément Marot* (Paris, 1940), 141–159, esp. 145–146.

[62] Clément Marot, *Epîtres*, ed. C.A. Mayer (London, 1958), 109–119.

[63] *Ibid.*, 281.

Basoche and in his second *coq-à-l'âne* of 1535 we find him in far more acerbic manner, evoking the tone of discussion of war at the time. In the third, of July 1536, Marot, writing this time in Venice, is even more explicit and mordant in his view of dynastic war. The emperor has just crossed into France and Marot confronts the enthusiasm for battle with the inevitability of death for a trivial piece of land.[64] These lines could, of course, be interpreted as straightforward anti-imperial propaganda; the tone, though, is one of criticism of war in general and disdain of dying in a glorious cause.[65] That Marot ever thought seriously of criticising royal policy head-on in public print is highly unlikely but he did in his more scurrilous and obscure works exploit gaps in official censorship. The *Grup* of 1542, if indeed by him, is a case in point, though so extreme as to be unpublishable at the time. The author of that extremely scurrilous *coq-à-l'âne* seems to express some of the grumbling at the waste of the opportunity of Charles V's visit to France in 1539.[66]

Popular verse in support of royal policy was churned out in great quantities in the sixteenth century. In part at least, it was a vehicle for the memorisation and communication of simple ideas on public affairs. To this traditional activity was added the printing press in the 1480s. *Rhétoriqueurs*, for their turn, were employed by the crown to publish invective against its enemies and engage in controversies. Robert Gaguin's *Passe-temps d'oisiveté* of 1488, called for peace between England and France in a verse which ended 'Vive France, vive Angleterre'.[67] The war of 1492, though, saw Octovien Saint-Gelais's scurrilous verses denouncing the English and calling on the French to throw them out[68] and a poem in honour of Anne de Beaujeu announced 'France, cimetière d'Anglois' and told the English: 'you would be better back in Wales drinking your beer'.[69]

The periods 1508–9, the War of the league of Cambrai and 1510–13, when France was beleaguered in Italy by yet another 'holy league' and in the north by Henry VIII, was particularly productive of such verse.

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[64] Marot, *Œuvres satiriques*, ed. C.A. Mayer (London, 1962), 121, 142–143, l. 181–192.
[65] *Ibid.*, I, 197–220.
[66] Clement Marot, *Oeuvres*, ed. G. Guiffrey, 5 vols. (Paris, 1911) II, 447; Marot, *Œuvres satiriques*, 176.
[67] Robert Gaguin, *Epistolae et orationes*, ed. L. Thuasne, 2 vols. (Paris, 1903), II, 409.
[68] H.-J. Molinier, *Essai biografique et littéraire sur Octovien de Saint-Gelays, évêque d'Angoulême (1468–1502)* (Rodez, 1910), 277.
[69] G. Ascoli, *La Grande Bretagne devant l'opinion française* (Paris, 1927), 22.

The conclusion of the league of Cambrai was celebrated in verse such as Pierre Gringore's *L'entreprise de Venise* of 1509. Popular printed verse tended to concentrate on the heroic achievements of the French, however limited, for instance in the naval fight off Brest in April 1513[70] or in the conquest of Hesdin in 1522 or the defence of Péronne in 1536. There were numerous rather neutral pieces published on Francis I's act of 'defiance' of 1528.[71] The peace of 1529 was celebrated with verse to welcome back the king's sons from captivity that confirms the point made by du Bellay, that the country was tired of war and had great hopes of peace.[72] The pamphlets published to celebrate the splendid entries of the emperor into the cities of France in 1539 add to the impression that much was expected of the peace.[73] On the other hand, more popular verses were circulating in 1536 on the emperor's ignominious retreat from Provence and in 1543 to celebrate French military successes against the emperor.[74] The imagery of the eagle pitted against a symbol for France, the salamander or the cock, was common in these years.[75] In 1543, the court poet Claude Chappuys published *L'aigle qui faict la poule devant la Coq à Landrecy*.

The farce, or *sottie*, had political implications. The confraternity of the law clerks of the Parlement of Paris, the Basoche, might seem an unlikely forum for dramatic satire, but one of its related companies, the *Confraternité des Sotz*, provided a stage for one of the leading satirical poets of the age to pronounce on public affairs in the form of *sotties*. Generally, the scope of poets to criticise public policy openly was very limited. The Basoche in 1504–5 was unrestrained in its attacks on the disgraced regime of Gié and his associates for the failure of the Garigliano campaign. Louis XII, though, was prepared to see the stage used as an instrument of propaganda and Gringore pushed this freedom of expression as far as it could go in a genre which by custom gave full liberty to speech only to the fools. Jean Bouchet praised the openness of *sotties* under Louis XII.[76]

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[70] *Ibid.*, 52.

[71] *Recueil de poésies françoises des XV^e^ et XVI^e^ siècles. Morales, facétieuses, historiques*, ed. A. de Montaiglon, 13 vols. (Paris, 1855–1878), X, 305–350.

[72] *Recueil de poésies françoises*, V, 85–93.

[73] *Cronique du roy Françoys*, 309.

[74] *Ibid.*, 191; *Recueil de poésies françoises*, VI, 215.

[75] *Cronique du roy Françoys*, 189–190.

[76] Jean Bouchet, *Epistres morales et familières du traverseur*, ed. J. Beard, 3 vols. (Wakefield/New York, 1969), I, f. 32v.

Such liberty of expression for fools was conceded mainly because it was oblique. On Shrove Tuesday 1512, Gringore staged the *sottie*, *Le Jeu du Prince des sotz et Mère Sotte*, which sought to portray Julius II as an object of scorn.[77] Liberty of expression for the Basoche was much more restricted under Francis I than under his predecessor. In the *Sottie des Croniqueurs*, for instance, we find no more than a slavish defence of royal policy.[78] Francis I clamped down on the Basoche from 1538, censorship was more explicit, public performances banned and some playwrights imprisoned.[79]

IV

How far can we gauge the temper of 'public opinion' or indeed the possibility of its formation in this period? The late fifteenth century saw an explosion of printed propaganda in favour of royal ambitions in Italy, some of it in the well-established genre of visions or prognostications that predicted world conquest for Charles VIII.[80] The expeditions to Italy and particularly the upheavals of 1509 and 1512 stimulated in print the production of quasi-historical treatises to justify royal policy. Lemaire de Belges, anxious to ingratiate himself with Louis XII, published his *Traicté des Schismes*, again attacking the pope.[81] Quasi-historical treatises on the iniquities of the Venetians almost poured from French presses in 1508–9.

How well was the populace informed of public events? The circulation of *plaquettes* is measurable to some extent by Sébastien Picotté's reliance on them, alongside Bouchet's chronicle until 1535, when he lards his narrative with Marot's *Chants* on public events to illustrate his narrative and *plaquettes* on public events. From 1535, his reliance on the latter is more extensive, beginning with a the richly ironic account of the emperor's campaigns of 1536, *Du glorieux retour de Lempereur de Provence* as well as pamphlets on the wars in Picardy in that year. For 1537, a narrative of the campaign in Artois, a report

[77] Gringore, *Œuvres*, 201–206.
[78] *Recueil général des sotties*, ed. E. Picot, 3 vols. (Paris, 1902–1912), II, nr. 16.
[79] H.G. Harvey, *The theatre of the Basoche. The contribution of the law societies to French medieval comedy* (Cambridge Mass., 1941), 195.
[80] La Pilorgerie, *Campagne et bulletins*, 46–47, 431–433.
[81] J. Lemaire de Belges, *Œuvres*, ed. J. Stecher, 4 vols. (Louvain, 1882–1891), III, 68–86.

of the Turkish raid on Brindisi, a *plaquette* on the investiture of the constable, the narrative of the negotiations of the truce of Nice.[82] Picotté was impressed by the emperor's visit to France, copying page after page of official descriptions and thereafter filled his chronicle with transcripts of documents concerning the emperor's activities in Germany and Algiers.[83] He copied the entire text of Villegaignon's narrative of the emperor's campaign in Algiers.

How much did the French people know or care about wars with the emperor other than as a justification employed by their rulers for taxation? The answer is conveyed by the frequency and complexity of royal manifestos. Though the space for independent public opinion was limited, it could not be ignored. Francis I's decision to cross into Italy in August 1523 was communicated through extraordinarily detailed missives to the *bonnes villes* which show the king in highly defensive mode. These asserted that 'the real intention of our enemies is to occupy Italy' and then hold France in servitude. So, the king announced his intention of crossing the Alps, but 'since it seems to us that you might find it strange that we should leave our kingdom while it is under such threat of war' he promised to return should his presence be needed.[84] After 1525 public attitudes were initially shaped by the need to reject the treaty of Pavia and recover the king's sons from captivity in Spain. The royal manifesto for tax assessment of 1527 specified that, in view of the impossibility of handing Burgundy over to the emperor and the continued detention of his sons, the king had taken counsel with his allies the pope, England and Venice to bring the emperor to reason 'who, seeing this and he or his council moved by his unnatural will' had marched his armies into Italy to capture Rome.[85]

Private writings tell the story on a different level. The mid-sixteenth century Provins chronicler, Claude Haton, testifies to the development of public opinion on foreign policy after the onset of the religious divisions around 1560 and is all the more telling for being an

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[82] *Cronique du roy Françoys*, 153–156,184–189, 206–214, 225–257, 232–236, 237–239, 240–256.

[83] *Ibid.*, 322–337, 337–362 (a translation of Villegaignon's *Caroli V, imperatoris, expeditio in Africam ad Argieram*).

[84] Francis I to Poitiers, 3 Aug. 1523, 'Lettres des rois de France a la commune de Poitiers' in *Archives historiques du Poitou* 4 (1875), 277–340, doc. no. 10.

[85] H. Hauser, *Le Traité de Madrid et la cession de la Bourgogne à Charles-Quint* (Paris, 1912), 177–178.

entirely private document. Haton had much to say about Charles V and considered him the most feared emperor since Charlemagne. He discoursed at length on his wars against the Turks and the heretics in Germany in defence of the Catholic Church and summed him up as 'one of the greatest warriors and fortunate knights of his time in Christendom and for a century before. In all his life there was no more fortunate knight or prince than he', other than the reigning King Henri II. France, he thought, 'could well call him her Atilla, that is, her great enemy and persecutor for, all his life he made war on her'.[86] It was true that Charles had been sumptuously received in France in 1539 and had promised perpetual peace, 'but the hope was vain'. The French invasion of Luxemburg in support of the Protestant princes he thought 'one of the gravest faults ever committed by the late King Francis'. The death of the king's youngest son Charles d'Orléans had come as a relief to the people, for he had been favoured by the emperor and the promised marriage between Orléans and the emperor's daughter would have been the cause of more wars. Haton's understanding of the wars that began in 1552 is telling. Charles, he thought, had justly punished the rebel Lutheran princes in 1546–7 but this had led them to send an appeal to the French king 'to inform him of the oppression' from which they suffered. The king of France consequently declared himself their protector even though the German Catholics were 'joined in good accord with the emperor'. Haton thought that the king could not have understood this when he mobilised his armies. The Metz campaign, Haton did not understand 'unless it was in favour of the German Lutherans'. So, though Haton, writing his notes before the death of Henri II, acknowledged him as a great ruler who had got the better of the emperor, the latter's commitment to the Catholic cause outweighed considerations of realpolitik. This view was not entirely consistent, of course. A critical attitude towards the constable de Montmorency's policy for his lack of energy in prosecuting war with the emperor is also apparent in his 'intelligence with the emperor' even though Haton himself acquits the constable of treason.[87]

France in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was presided over by a monarchy with an ideology of absolute power that allowed it to

[86] *Mémoires de Claude Haton. Edition intégrale*, ed. L. Bourquin *et al.* (Paris, 2001–), I, 97, 98–99, 102.
[87] Villars, *Mémoires*, 7, 41, 100–102, 507.

some extent to begin to iron out many of the anomalies of its system of government. On the other hand many contradictions and exemptions remained and there persisted a tension between ideas of absolute and mixed monarchy. Assemblies of estates continued to meet but their role in the conclusion of peace treaties was reduced to a formality. The formation of policy was shrouded in the secrecy of the inner council and became a matter of furious speculation by foreign observers.[88] However, that is not the end of the story. There is much more to be said about mobilization of opinion and comment on war in the sixteenth century. I have shown in my book, *Renaissance France at War*, how the crown systematically used the taxation system at its disposal, both in the *pays d'états* and the *pays d'élections*, to communicate a programme of justifications for its foreign policy objectives. I also discuss the way in which the visual arts and music were used to bolster the glories of French military achievements.[89] The first half of the sixteenth century saw the beginnings of the wide dissemination of printed battle pictures, while the composers of the period such as Janequin and Costeley developed the genre of the celebratory battle song.[90] This paper is a brief overview to show how the French Renaissance monarchy formulated its war policy in a society which was attuned to the discussion of high policy and not simply a passive mass of grumbling subjects. An idea of 'nation' certainly existed in France by the end of the Middle Ages but it was largely scholarly and concerned above all, though not exclusively, the social and political elites. The broader national consciousness that was generated by the controversies of Wars of Religion, however, has its precursor in the era of the Renaissance, generated by the need of the state to mobilise its resources for war.

[88] Potter, *A History of France, 1460–1560*, 29–56.
[89] Potter, *Renaissance France at war*, 267–71.
[90] *Ibid.*, 285–306.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CITY DEFEATED AND DEFENDED. CIVISM AS POLITICAL IDENTITY IN THE HABSBURG-BURGUNDIAN NETHERLANDS

Peter Arnade

In June 1467 Charles, count of Charolais succeeded Philip the Good as duke of Burgundy. After a short period of mourning for his father, Charles prepared for his political inauguration by visiting various counties and dukedoms. Instead of a grand liturgy of acclamation upon his assumption of Philip the Good's titles, Charles confronted urban grief. Entering Ghent on June 28, 1467 as the new count of Flanders, he clashed with pilgrims returning from the annual translation of the relics of the popular Saint Lieven. To make matters worse, trouble broke out elsewhere, the upshot of old quarrels never settled. With the old Duke Philip dead, the powerhouse territory of Brabant and its States immediately began discussions about a way to wangle concessions from Charles as a precondition of accepting his lordship. They even debated offering sovereignty to another prince if their demands were not met. Although this did not happen, Charles's inaugural visit to Mechelen on July 3 sparked internal turmoil and violence soon after the duke's departure, and Antwerp openly quarrelled with the new duke on the eve of his September 5 entry into the city.[1]

It was radicals in the prince-bishopric of Liège, however, who most angered the new duke, so much so that war soon broke out. Despite a spirited resistance, Liège surrendered on 12 November 1467 when its radical party crumbled and Burgundian forces entered the city. The punishment was severe. The city's walls and gates were dismantled, its houses raided, and its citizens violently assaulted. As punishment, a civic delegation of 340 men performed an *amende honorable* before the duke, a penitential ritual in which the defeated knelt in their

[1] On the Ghent revolt, see Peter Arnade, 'Secular charisma, sacred power. Rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467', *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent* 45 (1992), 69–94.

undergarments before a triumphant duke to beg his forgiveness.[2] A costly peace was brokered. Charles confiscated the city's prized charters of rights and privileges, and had its monument of urban pride, the Perron, removed to Bruges.[3] It is all the more amazing that less than a year later in September 1468 the *Liègois* would revolt anew as returning exiles stubbornly provoked trouble. This time, Charles disregarded any attempt at reconciliation, foregoing the rhetoric of clemency so important to late-medieval sovereigns. When the city was recaptured on 30 October 1468, soldiers were given a free hand to loot it. Even the churches were turned inside out, though Charles later required the ecclesiastical loot to be inventoried and returned, and famously protected the relics of Saint Lambert.[4] One soldier in Charles's pay wrote that the city was so systematically plundered that he could barely find paper upon which to write his impressions of the horror.[5]

Charles the Bold's troubled early reign was a rude reminder that despite his father's endeavours to command a royal title—a campaign Charles famously intensified—urban defiance was the Achilles heel of princely authority in the Burgundian Low Countries.[6] Cities in the Low Countries considered themselves as standard-bearers of a political tradition that emphasised their rights and privileges and the authority of the provincial States in which they wielded considerable power. Urban revolts directed against dynastic princes and again municipal

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[2] For the uses of the honorable amende elsewhere, see Peter Arnade, *Realms of ritual. Burgundian ceremony and civic life in late medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, 1996), 119–120 and for the southern Low Countries more generally, Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La ville des cérémonies. Essai sur la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons* (Turnhout, 2004), 302–311.

[3] For the sentence of 28 November 1467, see *Recueil des ordonnances de la principauté de Liège. Première série, 974–1506*, ed. Stanislas Bormans (Brussels, 1878), 617–628.

[4] A. Marchandisse, I. Vrancken-Pirson and J.L. Kupper, 'La destruction de la ville de Liège et sa reconstruction', in *Destruction et reconstruction de villes, du Moyen Âge à nos jours. Actes colloque international (Spa 1996)*, Crédit Communal 100 (Brussels, 1999), 69–96. Compelling accounts of the two Liège uprisings, and its destruction, are Henrici de Merica, *Compendiosa Historia de Cladibus Leodiensium*, in *Documents relatifs aux troubles du Pays de Liége sous les princes-évêques Louis de Bourbon et Jean de Horne, 1455–1505*, ed. P.F. de Ram (Brussels, 1844), 135–183 and Theodoricus Pauli, *Historia de Cladibus Leodiensium* in *ibidem*, 188-232, esp. 223–224 on the ransacking of religious houses and the final sack of the city.

[5] Letter of Antoine de Loisey, dated 3 November 1468, in *Régestes de la cité de Liège*, ed. Émile Fairon, 4 vols. (Liège, 1939), IV, 302–304.

[6] Wim Blockmans, 'La répression des révoltes urbaines comme méthode de centralisation dans les Pays-Bas bourguignons', *Publication du Centre européen d'études bourguignonnes (XIV^{e}–XVI^{e} s.)* 28 (1988), 5–9.

elites were frequent but frustratingly unpredictable.[7] Burgundian ceremonial vigour in the public eye always had multiple purposes, but foremost was to stage princely authority as a thing greater than its constitutional boundaries. When Philip the Good and Charles, as count of Charolois, accompanied the royal entry party of Louis XI into Paris in August 1461 they were so bedecked in jewel-encrusted clothing, an anonymous chronicler exclaimed that no words could do justice to their visual magnificence. The duke and his son had obviously convinced this observer that their splendour was an exhibition beyond description, a performance positioning them as ceremonial equal, if not superior, to the new king himself.[8] This investment of regal pretensions in the material splendour of dress culminated at a meeting with the Emperor Frederick III at Trier in 1473, when Charles and his advisors openly sought the office of king of the Romans, and used exemplary display to achieve a level of regal prestige without foundation in his own titles of rule.[9]

Trier was a Burgundian failure, but it should not obscure a more general cultural effort to secure a royal title. Friesland, Lotharingia and Burgundy were patrimonies whose ancient kingdoms offered the Burgundian dukes opportunities to resuscitate or invent royal titles of rule, and both Philip the Good and Charles the Bold used literary texts and political muscle to make this pursuit a reality.[10] These efforts floundered, but the cultural apparatus the dukes put to work on behalf of this conceit—an increasing regal bearing in public ceremony, classical

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[7] Marc Boone and Maarten Prak, 'Rulers, patricians and burghers. The great and the little traditions of urban revolt in the Low Countries', in *A miracle mirrored. The Dutch republic in European perspective*, ed. Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (Cambridge, 1995), 99–134 and Wim Blockmans, 'Alternatives to monarchical centralisation. The great tradition of revolt in Flanders and Brabant', in *Republiken und der Republikanismus im Europa der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Helmut G. Koenigsberger, Schriften des Historischen Kollegs Kolloquien 11 (Munich, 1988), 145–154.

[8] *Les entrées royales françaises de 1328 à 1515*, ed. Bernard Guenée and Françoise Lehoux (Paris, 1968), 90.

[9] A detailed description and analysis in Petra Ehm, *Burgund und das Reich. Spätmittelalterliche Außenpolitik am Beispiel der Regierung Karls des Kühnen (1465–1477)* (Paris, 2002), esp. 132–168.

[10] On Lotharingia, and Burgundy in particular, see Graeme Small, 'Of Burgundian dukes, counts, saints and kings (14 C.E.–c. 1520)', in *The ideology of Burgundy. The promotion of national consciousness, 1364–1565*, ed. D'A.J.D. Boulton and Jan R. Veenstra (Leiden, 2006), 151–187 and on Friesland, Jan R. Veenstra, '"Le prince qui se veult faire de nouvel roy". Literature and ideology of Burgundian self-determination', in *ibidem*, 195–221.

literary and artistic *topoi* like the Trojan and Argonautic themes pursued in manuscripts, tapestry sets and chivalric orders, and political campaigns of regional aggrandisement—were bequeathed after 1477 to the Habsburg heirs. Burgundian royal aspirations were finally realised and exceeded with Charles V's accession as Holy Roman emperor in 1519. And yet an intractable problem remained: the universal monarchy Charles V's Grand Chancellor Mecurino Arborio di Gattinara promoted had little traction in the Low Countries, where Charles's rule remained dispersed among regional titles.[11] Charles's power in the Low Countries was circumscribed and locally grounded.[12] As he groused to his brother Ferdinand in 1531, 'everyone in the Low Countries demands privileges that are contrary to my sovereignty, as if I were their companion and not their lord.'[13]

The strategy of exemplary display exercised by the Valois dukes and their Habsburg successors modelled the prince as paternalistic, the font of wisdom and clemency, but also the dispenser of punishment if necessary. Nowhere was righteous justice so dramatically practised as in the formal plunder of a city, the fate that befell Liège in 1468. A rite of victory that twined princely triumph with collective forms of pillage, the ritual punishment of a city had complicated political resonances, which is exactly why it was imposed only rarely during the incessant warfare of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Burgundian Netherlands. In 1996, a colloquium dedicated to the theme of the destruction and rebuilding of cities offered the first efforts to interpret this type of urban punishment. Marc Boone's essay on the political ideology behind the destruction of cities proved the utility of a type of retribution that seems ill conceived, since altering or demolishing the

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[11] See Francis Yates, *Aestraea. The imperial theme in the sixteenth century* (London, 1975) and now Maria Tanner, *The last descendant of Aeneas. The Hapsburgs and the mythic image of the emperor* (New Haven, 1993), esp. 109–130. For the imperial motifs, see Francis Yates, 'Charles Quint et l'idée d'empire', in *Fêtes et cérémonies au temps de Charles Quint*, ed. Jean Jacquot (Paris, 1969), 59–97 and Peter Burke, 'Presenting and re-presenting Charles V', in *Charles V and his time, 1500–1558*, ed. Hugo Soly (Antwerp, 1999), 393–476.

[12] On the Italian entries, see Bonner Mitchell, *The majesty of the state. Triumphal progresses of foreign sovereigns in Renaissance Italy (1494–1600),* Biblioteca dell' Archivum Romanicum serie I, 203 (Florence, 1986), 133–178 and a contemporary account of five of these entries by Andrea Sala, *La triomphale entrata di Carlo V. Imperatore Augusto in la inclita città di Napoli e di Messina* (1536) and *Ordini, pompe, apparati et cerimonie dell solenne intrate de Carlo V. sempre Aug. nella citta di Roma, Siena et Fiorenza* (1536).

[13] Quoted in James Tracy, *Emperor Charles V. Impresario of war (*Cambridge, 2002), 53.

urban landscape had little pragmatic value, and risked presenting the prince as a tyrant.[14] In what follows, I want to explore how princely triumphs over cities intended to punish urban opponents could also help forge new means of civic self identity, something I believe happened during the most violent years of the Dutch Revolt. It thus acquired a particular sharpness because of a historical connection to earlier Burgundian and Habsburg disciplinary measures. In taking up this theme, I want to broaden the frame in which we have previously studied princely reprisals against cities, their inhabitants, and their political environment, and rotate, if not flip, the viewpoint. The traumatic experience of urban sieges and urban sacks might have dramatically enacted the power of the prince, making him master of the city's very form and its fate. But townspeople who were the victims of such violence did not bury the experience. They routinely invoked the memory of past trauma in subsequent upheavals, presenting a community ideal of citizens united by the tribulations of blood and violence.

Scholars as diverse as Ernst Kossmann and Herbert Rowen have asked why the Dutch Revolt, midwife to the seventeenth-century United Provinces, was itself without great treatises on republicanism.[15] Perhaps the best explanation for the development of civic republicanism in the relative absence of its theoretical articulation is that its source was so not much formal treatises as raw historical experience itself. From the humiliation of Bruges in 1440 and Ghent in 1458, to the pillage and destruction of Dinant and Liège in 1466 and 1468, to the violent reprisals against Mechelen, Naarden, Zutphen, Leiden and Antwerp in the 1570s, Low Country cities were convulsed by the violence of princes and their armies. As much as these desecrations dramatised the Prince's victory, they simultaneously provoked

[14] Marc Boone, '"Civitas mori potest si authoritate superioris damnetur". Politieke motieven voor het bewust verwoesten van steden (14de–16de eeuw)', in *Destruction et reconstruction de villes*, 339–368.

[15] For a historiographical discussion, see Wyger R.E. Velema, '"That a republic is better than a monarchy". Anti-monarchism in early modern Dutch political thought', in *Republicanism. A shared European heritage,* ed. Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2001), I, 9–25; Ernst Kossmann, *Politieke theorie in het zeventiende-eeuwse Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1960) and Herbert Rowen, 'The Dutch republic and the idea of freedom', in *Republicanism, liberty and commercial society, 1649–1776*, ed. David Wootten (Stanford, 1994), 310–340. E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier explores the impact of the myth of Venetian republicanism on the United Provinces in the seventeenth century in his *The myth of Venice and Dutch republican thought in the seventeenth century*, trans. G.T. Moran (Assen, 1980).

a heightened civic consciousness that more than formal treatises on Ciceronian citizenship or republican virtue reminded townspeople of the sodalities that defined their community. The flip side of princely triumph was an injured civism in which townspeople recognised that their cherished institutions and political principles were vulnerable. In the trauma of violence, citizens were forced to confront that which defined them, if for no other reason than that their princely opponents made these principles, social practices, and urban sites targets of the state's opprobrium. When victorious against a siege, townspeople gained something even greater: an elated sense of urban heroism that posited the city as the fundamental marker of self and political identity.

The exemplary punishment of cities, as Wim Blockmans and Marc Boone have shown, was a political strategy of the Burgundian and early Habsburg dynasties in the Low Countries. But it was differently applied depending on the relative value of a city and its place within the Burgundian patrimony, and depending too on the ideological temper of the ruler and his senior advisors. Bruges between 1438 and 1440 and Ghent between 1453 and 1458 were well-known testing grounds for the settlement of conflicts. The punishments meted out against them combined financial penalties and monetary reparations with ceremonies of defeat. This repertoire of punishment included the symbolic destruction of gates, the political theatre of the *amende honorable*, and an entry ceremony that cast the prince as saviour and redeemer. The punishment of Bruges and Ghent were test cases of a strategy of urban humiliation and ritual acclaim for the prince.[16] But for reasons of economic prudence and princely ideals of clemency, neither city had its built environment severely altered, for as Philip the Good reputedly observed about Ghent in 1453, no good prince would fully destroy an important part of his patrimony.[17]

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[16] Blockmans, 'La répression des révoltes urbaines'; Boone, '"Civitas mori potest"'. On the revolts of Bruges and Ghent, see Jan Dumolyn, *De Brugse opstand van 1436–1438,* Standen en landen 101 (Kortrijk, 1997); Jelle Haemers, *De Gentse opstand 1449–1453. De strijd tussen rivaliserende netwerken om het stedelijk kapitaal*, Standen en landen, 105 (Kortrijk, 2004). On penalties, see Boone, '"Civitas mori potest"' and, for Ghent, Arnade, *Realms of ritual*, 122–124.

[17] Marc Boone, 'Diplomatie et violence d'état. La sentence rendue par les ambassadeurs et conseillers du roi de France, Charles VII, concernant le conflit entre Philippe le Bon, duc de Bourgogne, et Gand en 1452', *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire* 156 (1990), 1–54, esp. 35. For Philip the Good's remark, see Boone, '"Civitas mori potest"', 343.

All that would change with Charles the Bold's campaign against Liège and Dinant. But as cities within a dependent but separate prince-bishopric, the violent punishment meted out to Liège and Dinant did not carry the same political repercussions for Charles the Bold, making a harsher penalty easier to impose. Neither city was under Charles's lordship, though in the peace of Sint Truiden in 1465 his father had manoeuvred himself as hereditary guardian of the principality.[18] Liège's legal standing vis-à-vis Burgundian lordship and the wider arc of Burgundian political networks was complex: officially it was an imperial bishopric, but since 1456 it was under the authority of a disliked bishop who was the new duke's cousin; geographically, it became an enclave between Brabant and Limburg, but one for which Philip the Good was the official protector. As seat of the bishop, Liège had the prestige of ecclesiastical authority and important devotions. For these reasons, Charles opted to punish Dinant first on 26 August 1466.[19] So complete was the destruction that the chronicler Jacques du Clercq observed that after four days of the systematic destruction of properties and walls, an observer could remark, 'Dinant used to be here'.[20]

Dinant's pillage was something new in the repertoire of Burgundian penalties because cities in the past had not earned such serious castigation after a revolt. Despite its greater importance Liège ultimately fared little better; its systematic burning and dismantlement was an enterprise that involved the supervision of Burgundian officers like the lieutenant general Guy de Brimeu, lord of Humbercourt, and carpenters and other workmen who had to dismantle houses while protecting churches and chapels from fire. The city was rid of its walls and privileges—the physical and constitutional symbols of urban pride and rights. Its ecclesiastical goods, holy vessels of the bishopric's sacerdotal authority, were looted. The city's centre island in the Meuse was made into a ducal enclave, and renamed *Isle le Duc*.[21] While not its

[18] Godefroid Kurth, *La cité de Liège au moyen âge*, 3 vols. (Brussels, 1910), III, 221–222.

[19] Aldophe Borgnet, 'Sac de Dinant par Charles-le-Téméraire, 1466,' *Annales de la Société archéologique de Namur* 3 (1853), 1–92.

[20] Borgnet, 'Sac de Dinant', 56; Jacques du Clercq, *Mémoires,* in *Choix de chroniques et mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France*, ed. J.A.C. Bouchon (Paris, 1875), 1–318, esp. 300–303.

[21] The final 1468 sack is recounted in De Merica, *Compendiosa Historia*, 135–183 and Pauli, *Historia de Cladibus*, 188-232. See also the compelling letter by a soldier in

hereditary prince, Charles became lord and protector, remaking Liège in his image. His famous votive offering of a golden statue of himself and Saint George in a city whose other sacred objects and spaces had been looted secured his position as protector of the sacred itself, not unlike a French king, not unlike, that is, his rival Louis XI whom he earlier watched undergo religious acclamation as new monarch.

The fate of Liège and Dinant was soon overshadowed by war in other territories, and then muted by newer and more pressing waves of upheavals such as the spate of urban rebellions that began in the wake of 1477.[22] But the exemplary punishment of these two cities was never fully forgotten. Apart from the destruction that befell their urban public space, there was the plain violence against the citizenry, which observers described in raw terms, often observing that the sexual violence of rape was its signature. To protect the prince's image as fount of clemency and as paternal guardian of his subjects, acts of rape were attributed to his irresponsible soldiers. Most observers were quick to describe murder and rape as the epitome of soldierly violence, especially in Dinant and Liège, and they noted the prince's role as protector of innocent and dependent civilians. The chronicler Jean de Haynin observed that Charles entered Dinant on 26 August 1466 in grand ceremonial style, and two days later, carefully ordered all women to exit the city before its destruction. Still, murder, mayhem and rape rattled the city, and the prince tried, according to Jacques du Clercq, to mitigate the chaos by the execution of three soldiers judged guilty of sexual violence.[23] Whether or not Charles actually meted out this punishment or was portrayed as doing so to polish his image, rape captured the full horror of the princely sack, a theme echoed in descriptions of Liège's pillage. Take the emotional pitch sounded by observers like Thierry Pauwels, Canon and Dean of the collegiate church of Saint Martin, who protested the rape of 'honest matrons' and 'virgins' by the same ruffian soldiers who pillaged church and chapel.

Charles the Bold's pay recounting the final pillage, dated 3 November 1468 in *ibidem*, 302–304. For a spatial analysis, see Boone, '"Civitas mori potest"', 359–360.

[22] Willem Pieter Blockmans, 'Autocratie ou polyarchie? La lutte pour le pouvoir politique en Flandre de 1482 à 1492, d'après des documents inédits', *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire* 140 (1974), 257–368.

[23] Borgnet, 'Sac de Dinant', 50–51 for a discussion and its sources; Du Clercq, *Mémoires*, 1, 300.

Other reports also echoed his focus on rape, described as on par with the looting of sacred objects and places of worship.[24]

As in Dinant, or so the chroniclers tell us, Charles tried to prevent excessive violence in Liège, and sexual violence especially, but in both cities he failed.[25] His inability to control this ghastly behaviour points to the inherent risk of an urban sack as a form of princely punishment, for an assault could easily go beyond the boundaries set for it, with the prince incurring the charge of excessive tyranny against defenceless people. In both Dinant and Liège, rape is what the prince vouched to prevent but failed to do, and the assault against wives, daughters, and single women came to embody the rawness of the violence inflicted upon citizens. Rape not only described the horror of the violence itself, but metaphorically did duty as master symbol of the city violated. Perhaps rape was so powerful a descriptor of urban destruction not only because of its reality but also because, since the classical era, it served as the gendered leitmotif of an urban sack. The very Latin term that came to describe a city plundered, the verbal noun *direptio*, as Adam Ziolkowski has pointed out, signified two simultaneous activities: plundering a city and raping its citizenry, women above all, but youth too.[26] These became protocols of violence, woven into soldiers' understanding of what was permissible during ransacking.

Under the Habsburg sovereigns, these practices only intensified as imperial associations deepened and territorial possessions widened. Charles V was hailed as the greatest exemplar of universal monarchy since Charlemagne by the men of his imperial chancery, notably his tireless spokesperson, Gattinara, and the imperial almoner and Bishop of Badajoz, Pedro Ruiz de la Mota.[27] Such imperial imagery emerged early in his political career, even before the young prince had secured

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[24] Pauli, *Historia de Cladibus*, 224 and Adrien d'Oudenbosch, *Chronicon rerum Leodiensium sub Johannes de Heinsbergio et Luodovico Borbonio espiscopis (1429–1483),* ed. C. de Bourman (Liège, 1902), 216 and also Kurth, *La cité de Liège*, III, 333–334.

[25] *Mémoires de Jean, sire de Haynin et de Louvignes, 1465–1477*, ed. D. Brouwers, 2 vols. (Liège, 1905–1906), II, 89, on Charles's decree to protect women, children, religious, and ecclesiastical property.

[26] Adam Ziolkowski, '*Urbs direpta*, or how the Romans sacked cities', in *War and society in the Roman world*, ed. John Rich and Graham Shipley (London, 1993), 68-91, who references especially Tacitus, *Histories*, 3: 33 1–3.

[27] See Yates, *Aestraea*, esp. 1–28; Yates, 'Charles Quint', 57–98; Tanner, *Last descendant of Aeneas,* esp. 109–130; Burke, 'Presenting and re-presenting Charles V', 393–476.

the title of Holy Roman emperor in 1519. Already at Charles's entry into Bruges in 1515 when he became the count of Flanders, the city's foreign trade associations touted imagery beyond the standard fare reserved for Burgundian princes, including a Hanseatic triumphal arch featuring the figure of Atlas helped by a lion to hold up the world, and an Italian arch on the *Beursplein* bearing the laudatory inscription: 'A Charles qui doibt dompter le monde'.[28] By contrast, Bruges' guilds and rhetorician chambers mounted *tableaux vivants* flush with local pride and religious analogies. They staged Bruges as the new celestial city, twinning a story of their cultural and economic prestige to parallel narratives about Jerusalem. In a *tableau* sponsored by the brokers before the *Prinsenhof*, Charles faced an allegorical Wheel of Fortune, cast as King Ahasuerus and implored to restore Bruges to its economic summit, just as the destroyed Jerusalem had been.[29] It was a culminating moment of the entry, the city linking the fate of its future to Charles's power to rejuvenate its economy and cultural élan. But it was unwittingly prescient in presenting Charles before a vanquished and broken city. For even more than Philip the Good, Charles the Bold, Maximilian or Philip the Fair, the future emperor would show his mastery over the fate of cities, exercising exemplary punishments that were powerfully linked to classical models.

The cultural and ideological effort to frame Charles's composite empire as a new universal monarchy was international in frame but drew heavily on the Burgundian penchant for Argonautic analogies that had been embraced in the fifteenth century, and newer imperial ones with a Roman overlay. The exemplary punishment of cities had considerable traction in this imperial project, though with mixed results, particularly in its most famous instance, the sack of Rome in 1527, which Charles had failed to control, much less manage.[30] The attention given to the famous campaign against Clement VII that

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[28] The entry led to a commemorative booklet by Remy du Puys, *La tryumphante Entrée de Charles Prince des Espagnes en Bruges 1515*, ed. Sydney Anglo (Amsterdam, s.d.). See also Peter Arnade, 'The Emperor and the city. The cultural politics of the joyous entry in early sixteenth-century Ghent and Flanders, 1500–1540', in *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent* 54 (2000), 65–92, esp. 77–80.

[29] Brief analysis in Wim Blockmans, 'Emperor's subjects', in *Charles V and his time*, 274.

[30] On the sack of Rome, see André Chastel, *The sack of Rome, 1527*, ed. and trans. Beth Archer (Princeton, 1983) and J. Hook, *The sack of Rome* (London, 1972) and the source collections: *Memorias para la historia del asalto y saqueo de Roma*, ed. Don

culminated in Rome's pillage has, however, downplayed two other important triumphs: an all but forgotten razing of the French royal enclave of Thérouanne in 1533, and the capture of Tunis in 1535 and the analogy polemicists struck between the event and Scipio Aemilianus' sack of Carthage in 146 BCE in the third Punic War.[31]

Thérouanne's punishment restated a dramatic, if smaller, version of the campaigns against Dinant and Liège. It was the compact and thinly populated seat of an important bishopric, overshadowed by Saint-Omer twelve kilometres to its north. It was also a French enclave within Artois, and had been something of a football, passed back and forth in the interminable conflicts of the early sixteenth century. Charles had claimed dominion over it in 1525, but the city had been retaken by French hands in 1553. On 30 June 1553, ten days after his forces seized Thérouanne, Charles ordered its destruction 'so that there would remain only a place where one would say Thérouanne used to exist'.[32] Even the cathedral was razed, a reminder, as was the case with Liège, that a bishopric's religious privilege guaranteed no measure of safety.

But it was Rome's sacking at the hands of Charles's imperial forces, of Spanish, Italian, and German troops on a foggy, rain-soaked 6 May 1527 that made the point that no city and no power, not even papal Rome, was exempt from the imperial reach of Charles's power. German lansquenets and Spanish and Italian infantry poured into the city while a startled Clement VII, his curia personnel and his cardinals fled into the safety of the Castel Sant'Angelo where they were joined eventually by some three thousand citizens. What transpired sent shock waves throughout Europe, and became the subject of bitter polemics and sharp-tongued pasquinades that drew on the talents of some of Renaissance Europe's greatest literati.[33] Rome's violent plunder hit like a thunderclap, but was merely a prelude to months of

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Antonio Rodriguez Villa (Madrid, 1875) and *Il sacco di Roma del 1527*, ed. Maria L. Lenzi (Florence, 1978).

[31] On Thérouanne, see Bernard Delmaire, 'Thérouanne et Hesdin. Deux destructions (1553), une reconstruction', in *Destruction et reconstruction de villes*, 127–153 and on the Tunis campaign, Tracy, *Emperor Charles V*, 145–149.

[32] Cited in Delmaire, 'Thérouanne et Hesdin', 133.

[33] See Francesco Guicciardini's account in *Il sacco di Roma del 1527. Narrazioni de contemporanei*, ed. Carlo Milanesi (Florence, 1867); critical edition in English: Luigi Guicciardini, *The sack of Rome*, ed. James H. McGregor (New York, 1999). Alfonso de Valdés's apology, *Diálogo entre Lactancio y un Arcediano* in *Memorias para la historia*, 394–438 and critical English edition in *Alfonso de Valdés and the sack of Rome.*

occupation at the hands of angry forces which had lost their French leader Charles, Duke of Bourbon, on the first day of the assault. Rape and pillage could be blamed on soldierly misconduct, especially that of the German Lutherans, but the plundering of relics, the rank humiliation of cardinals—including forcing Cardinal Aracoeli to participate in his own mock funeral—and the pillage of churches presented Charles with a public relations problem. The forced imprisonment of Clement VII and the reduction of Rome to a smouldering slaughter house hardly befitted an emperor who was a sworn enemy of the Lutheran heresy and the newer menace of iconoclasm.[34]

It took the triumph of Tunis in 1536 to ease the sting of the sacking of Rome. If the attack on Rome was described as analogous to Jerusalem's fate at the hands of Titus, then Tunis was touted as Carthage anew, and Charles V as the heroic victor in the manner of his Roman predecessors.[35] Charles's victory over Khaireddin Barbarossa at the Port of Goletta and the freeing of its Christian slaves was one of the emperor's most important triumphal moments. The 'cultural commission' of artists and writers Charles put together to accompany him on this African campaign points to the emperor's shrewd awareness of its public relations value.[36] The Tunis victory did not secure a successful Mediterranean strategy, but however limited its political value, the effort was touted as part glorious crusade and part classical triumph. Upon his return to Italy, Charles's presentation as a victorious Caesar was sounded in one classical triumph after another. In Messina, captured Moslems even participated in the triumph, seated in a small chariot, and paraded before the emperor as he approached the city walls.[37] In Rome, the city displayed refurbished pride with the parade route laid out to revive the ancient *via triumphalis*. Charles was hailed as a classical *imperator* to a city which soldiers in his pay had

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Dialogue of Lactancio and an archdeacon, ed. John E. Longhurst (Albuquerque, 1952), with transcription of Baldassare Castiglione's angry rejoinder in *ibidem*, 101–117.

[34] The destruction of holy objects, churches and chapels in Chastel, *The sack of Rome*, 108.

[35] On the Jerusalem analogy, see letter of the abbot of Nagera to Charles V in *Memorias para la historia*, 140.

[36] The term is Geoffrey Parker's in his 'The political world of Charles V', in *Charles V and his time*, 164.

[37] Mitchell, *Majesty of the state,* 151–174 for a review of the Italian entries. For Messina, see *ibidem*, 152–153. See also André Chasel, 'Les entrées de Charles Quint en Italie', in *Fêtes et cérémonies*, 197–206.

only recently devastated.[38] It was a stunning renewal after the hatred incurred by his mercenary forces in 1527.

Such triumphalism, however, hardly quelled Charles's troubles, and reverberated in a minor way in the Low Countries, where once again an urban flare up would test the Prince's attention. Ghent was no stranger to trouble and had a reputation as a princely irritant. But when its Broad Council and aldermen blocked a request for a war subsidy that other Members of Flanders had supported, and then fanned the flames of opposition throughout its hinterland, Charles V opted for the kind of exemplary punishment his predecessors had invoked. The Ghent revolt of 1539 brought into relief the slippage between the imperial ideal of Gattinara and other chancery humanists and the intractable problem of local resistance, between the universalism they touted and the regionalism that defined politics itself. Ghent reacted as it always had done by emphasising the right to deny a prince's request if it seemed unreasonable, and agitated for the restoration of political privileges scaled back since the 1515 peace of Cadzant. Charles, flush in the triumphalism of his north African victory and the imperial acclamations of the Italian entries, could hardly brook a challenge that insisted on the limits of his authority and his local title as mere Count of Flanders.[39] Vainglorious guild masters and radical *dagloners* stood in the way of a war subsidy, and though it was a small affair, Charles made the unusual decision to travel all the way to Flanders to settle it personally.

As he crossed France, a string of cities, Paris included, welcomed him with grand receptions that massaged his princely vanity. There were classically-laced paeans to his authority and allegorically-rich triumphal arches, especially as he neared Flanders, with memorable *joyeuses entrées* in Saint-Quentin, Cambrai, and finally Valenciennes, where the Regent and the Council of State came from Brussels to greet

[38] The main source of Charles's entry into Rome is the official account in Sala, *Ordini*, f. A2r–B3v.

[39] See Marc Boone, '"Le dict mal s'est espandu comme peste fatale". Karel V en Gent, stedelijke identiteit en staatsgeweld', *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent* 54 (2000), 31–61 and Peter Arnade, 'Privileges and the political imagination in the Ghent revolt of 1539', in *Charles V in context. The making of a European identity*, ed. Marc Boone and Marysa Demoor (Brussels, 2003), 103–124.

him.[40] The grandeur of his acclamation by the king of France and his urban communities only underscored the quality of insult and treason Ghentenars had stirred by opposing his Regent's request, and blocking the Members of Flanders' assent. On February 14, Charles entered Ghent with two thousand Spanish men from his guard and three thousand German mercenaries before an anxious and awed population. Just as his trip to his native city had been one enormous spectacle of imperial power, his settlement imposed on Ghent was conducted in the finest Burgundian tradition of political theatre that Anne Laure van Bruaene has explored in this volume. The Caroline concession, the constitutional settlement imposed on the city that delimited the traditional authority of the guilds; the intervention in Ghent's ritual calendar with legislation against the popular processions of the Auweet, Onze-Lieve-Vrouw and Sint-Lieven; the tearing down of key gates and walls; the spectacle of the *amende honorable*, performed in the city on 3 May 1540 that prefaced the surrender of all city and most guild privileges to the emperor; and the construction of a military citadel after the abbey of Sint-Baafs was razed have usually been interpreted as the culmination of a tradition of urban punishment begun by Philip the Good in the mid fifteenth century.[41] As true as this is, it is also important to view Ghent's defeat as part of a broader complex of Habsburg imperial designs to suppress local political identities and urban traditions deemed too strong.

In the Low Countries, Ghent's punishment was the end point of its famed late medieval chapter, but as a political ritual, it is best interpreted less as an apex than as a mid point in the Burgundian-Habsburg campaign against urban public life. Charles V lorded over Ghent much like his predecessors had, but with a fuller complement of urban punishments. He also issued the more serious charge

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[40] Arthur Dinaux, 'Entrée joyeuse de l'Empereur Charles Quint en sa ville de Valenciennes avec les fils du roi de France, François Ier du nom (1540)', *Archives historiques et littéraires du nord de la France et du midi de la Belgique* n.s. 4 (1842), 349–366.

[41] For the Caroline Concession, see *Les coutumes de la ville de Gand*, ed. L. de Hondt and A. du Bois, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1887), II, 140–183. For the alteration of Ghent's public life, Arnade, *Realms of ritual*, 205–206; Boone, '"Civitas mori potest"', 362–364. On the construction of Ghent's citadel, and sixteenth-century citadels in the Netherlands in general, see P. Lombaerde, 'Herrschaftsarchitektur. Über den Abbruch von Zitadellen und den Bau neuer Paläste in den Niederlanden', in *Italienische Renaissancebaukunst an Schelde, Maas und Niederrhein. Stadtanlagen, Zivilbauten, Wehranlagen*, ed. G. Bers and C. Doose (Jülich, 1999), 317–333.

of *lèse majesté* against the city for its stubborn defiance in a cultural moment in which he was a new Scipio and each of his errant cities a potential Carthage.[42] Even after Charles abdicated his possessions and retired from political life in 1555, princely triumphalism flourished. While Philip II did not inherit his father's imperial title, he intensified Charles's effort to curtail pockets of urban provincialism. The vigorous upswing in Protestantism rendered this effort more complex in the Low Countries. But it took not the opposition of the *grands seigneurs* and *gentilshommes* in the 1560s, nor the startling iconoclastic riots of 1566, but instead the governorship of the Duke of Alba for the dynamic of urban resistance and princely triumphs to resurface, and this time more fiercely than ever before.

When the Duke of Alba arrived in Brussels in August 1567, he had a mandate to clamp down on the dissent of the nobility, stop the public practice of Protestantism, and punish any remaining iconoclasts. But he did so through a top-down campaign that involved billeting the 10,000 men who accompanied him into certain cities and by launching an effort to construct Italian-style citadels in key urban locations like Valenciennes, Amsterdam and Antwerp.[43] This effort to militarise the supervision of urban life was the subject of bitter controversy, but its connection to past efforts was obvious. Charles the Bold, after all, had created an enclave of ducal rule in the middle island of Liège and also first seriously pursued the idea of a citadel in Ghent. Still, the impact of Alba's zeal for citadels cannot be underestimated. The choice of Ghent for a sizable segment of his *tercios* and the construction of Antwerp's citadel fed restlessness and resentment in both cities. By contrast, as Henk van Nierop has observed, the ability of Amsterdam's Catholic magistrates to prevent Alba's plan for a citadel there bolstered their popularity and was a factor in their ability to rebuff the Beggars' campaign to dislodge them from power.[44] The citadels also acquired

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[42] A political analysis of the sentence against the Ghentenars is in Boone, '"Civitas mori potest"' but see also Johan Decavele and Paul van Peteghem, 'Gent "absoluut" getemd', in *Gent. Apologie van een rebelse stad*, ed. Johan Decavele (Antwerp, 1989), 107–133.

[43] On the introduction of Italian-style military citadels into the Low Countries, see the architectural study by Charles van den Heuvel, *'Papiere bolwercken'. De introductie van de Italiaanse stede- en vestingbouw in de Nederlanden (1540–1609) en het gebruik van tekeningen* (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1991).

[44] Henk van Nierop, 'Confessional cleansing. Why Amsterdam did not join the Revolt (1572–1578)', in *Power and the city in the Netherlandic world*, ed. Wayne te Brake and Wim Klooster (Leiden, 2006), 85–102.

enormous symbolic import since they were so closely tied to princely authority, and in the case of Antwerp's, with Alba himself. Stealing a page from his mentor Charles V's princely bombast, Alba put his personal stamp upon the construction of Antwerp's fortress, and named four of the five bastions after himself: Duke, Ferdinand, Toledo, Alba, with the fifth reserved for the architect Paciotto.[45] He also commissioned a free standing statue of himself trampling upon an allegorical two-headed, six-armed creature that in May 1571 was placed in the middle of the citadel's interior plaza. But the artwork was considered so vainglorious a representation that it earned Alba both the ire of local citizens and the hushed disapproval of some of Philip II's advisors.[46]

Alba's citadels and his free-standing Antwerp statue might have been controversial, but they were nothing new. Yet the fierce warfare that transpired after Orange's forces carried out their multi-pronged invasion of the Netherlands in 1572 proved a tipping point, with the exemplary punishments of cities so extreme that they provoked a public counter-reaction launched in pamphlets and early chronicles—an awareness of a common civic identity forged through the tumult of violence. In the period of the Revolt, the trauma of a civic siege and sack became a wellspring for the shaping of civic pride and patriotic lore, providing fertile grounds for notions of popular sovereignty and urban rights to flourish. A citizenry imperilled became exemplars of an almost Ciceronian civic virtue, banding together to counter assaults upon their property and persons for the defence of the public good.

In many ways, the Revolt's iconic moments were about cities and their survival. Leiden's heroic withstanding of its two sieges between 1573–4 became the master symbol of victory and Antwerp's sack in 1576 served as the example of tyranny and its wrath. But before either set of events, Alba's pillage of the archbishopric of Mechelen in 1572 as punishment for its earlier welcoming of Orange's forces captured

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[45] On the Antwerp citadel, see Hugo Soly, 'De bouw van de Antwerpse citadel (1567–1571). Sociaal-economische aspecten', *Belgisch tijdschrift voor militaire geschiedenis* 21 (1976), 549–578; H. Wauwermans, *Les citadelles du sud et du nord d'Anvers* (Brussels, 1880); Van den Heuvel, *'Papiere Bolwercken'*, 5–11.

[46] L. Smolderen, *La statue du duc d'Albe à Anvers par Jacques Jonghelinck (1571)* (Brussels, 1972); L. Smolderen, *Jacques Jonghelinck. Sculpteur, médallieur et graveur de sceaux (1530–1606)* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1996), 117–151, and Jochen Becker, 'Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall. Zum Standbild Albas in der Zitadelle von Antwerpen, 1571–1574', *Simiolus* 5 (1971), 75–115.

considerable attention.[47] Mechelen's fate would have passed silently into the history of urban pillage but for two facts: it inaugurated a cycle of commemorations about the fate of Netherlandish cities at the hands of the Army of Flanders' forces, and it drew force because it brought home the irony of defenders of the Catholic order wreaking havoc against Church and property, an echo of the more famous sack of Rome in 1527. To make matters worse, Mechelen was part of the king's own territories, and the punishment exacted against it was personally ordered by Alba. Three days of plundering that began on 2 October 1572 was decried in two anonymous contemporary accounts, in a slightly later Calvinist account published in Antwerp, in a famous print by Frans Hogenberg, and by early historians of the Revolt such as Pieter Bor.[48] These commentators zeroed in on the plundering of religious goods and objects. As with accounts of the sack of Rome, commentators bitterly noted that the Catholic avengers of Protestant wrongdoing themselves engaged in the looting and destruction of sacred objects and spaces. But more than anything else, the reports focus on the rape and pillage of Mechelen's citizenry, offering harrowing accounts of the sexual violence against young women and wives, and the plight of the motherless children who survived the sack. Like Dinant and Liège, Mechelen proved how these reprisals could spiral out of control. An eyewitness claimed scores of Mechelen's townspeople were assaulted and killed, and women singled out for rape.[49]

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[47] On the sack of Mechelen, see Guido Marnef, *Het calvinistisch bewind te Mechelen, 1580–1585* (Kortrijk-Heule, 1987), 79–85; Henri Installé, 'Verwoesting en wederopbouw te Mechelen in de zestiende eeuw', in *Destruction et reconstruction de villes*, 155–184, esp. 161; E. van Autenboer, 'Mechelen in de 16de eeuw. Schade wordt toegebracht en hersteld', *Koninklijke kring voor oudheidkunde, letteren en kunst van Mechelen* 89 (1985), 197–242.

[48] For sixteenth-century accounts, see *Mechelen met verraedt ingenomen 12 Augusti 1572*, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, ms. 6203, f. 21r-30v, an overview of the sack by a loyalist nevertheless horrified by the destruction; *Waerachtige beschryvinge van de destructie geschiet binnen de stadt Mechelen gedaan by den Spaingaerden in den jaer 1572*, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, ms. 17219–20, f. 2r–19v, a Calvinist-Patriot viewpoint written anonymously in Antwerp in 1581; and an eyewitness to the troubles caused by the Army of Flanders' violence, *Discours du pillage de Malines fait le 2e Octobre 1572*, in *Mengelingen van historisch-vaderlandschen inhoud*, ed. J.F. Willems (Antwerp, 1827–1830), 393–422. See also Pieter Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin en vervolgh der Nederlantsche oorlogen, beroerten, en borgerlijke oneenigheden*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1679–1684), I, 409–410. For military events, see William S. Maltby, *Alba. A biography of Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, third duke of Alba, 1507–1582* (Berkeley, 1983), 225–261; Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* (London, 1977), 140–141.

[49] *Discours du pillage de Malines*, 415.

He described how women were hung by their breasts, how married women and young girls were raped, and even how a pregnant woman was stabbed in the stomach, the assault inducing labour and resulting in a premature newborn, who died almost immediately.[50]

Just like Liège, a 'city raped' became a gendered metaphor of an excessive punishment. Different, however, were the political context and intellectual winds. By 1572 the Revolt had harvested a substantial pamphlet literature about rights and privileges and their vulnerability at the hands of Spanish tyranny as Netherlandish rebels issued proclamations on behalf of fatherland and freedom.[51] The 'city pillaged' became a signature of tyrannical rule because of the intensity of the violence against a vulnerable citizenry and because the Revolt had developed a conceptual vocabulary in its pamphlet literature about freedoms and rights which these assaults made concrete and tangible. The horror of the violence only intensified with Alba's systematic destruction and ransacking of Zutphen and Naarden, whose fate became watchwords for Spanish tyranny-proof that Philip II's captain general sought to obliterate cities by their murderous plunder.[52] But it was the famous 'Spanish Fury' of Antwerp by unpaid and aggrieved units of the Army of Flanders, which had gathered in Antwerp's hated citadel on 4 November 1576 that came to epitomise Spanish tyranny over urban freedom.[53]

By 1576, Netherlandish 'patriots' had adorned William of Orange with paternal and domestic epithets, especially that of Father of the Fatherland, a designation once the exclusive preserve of royalty. They also praised the timelessness of Dutch privileges and liberties and

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[50] *Discours du pillage de Malines*, 414.

[51] For the pamphlet literature on rights and privileges and its shaping, see Martin van Gelderen, *The political thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555–1590* (Cambridge, 1992), and on the Patriots, see Alastair Duke's chapter in this volume.

[52] For the two sacks and Alba's military campaign, see Maltby, *Alba*, 240–245 and Peter Arnade *Beggars, iconoclasts and civic patriot: the political culture of the Dutch revolt* (Ithaca, 2008).

[53] On the Spanish Fury of Antwerp, see the archival documents assembled in *La furie espagnole. Documents pour servir à l'histoire du sac d'Anvers en 1576*, ed. P. Génard (Antwerp, 1876) in addition to P. Génard, 'Les poursuites contre les fauteurs de la furie espagnole ou du sac d'Anvers de 1576', *Annales de l'Académie d'archéologie de Belgique* 5 (1879) 25–170. An analysis of its prelude is in Etienne Rooms, 'Een nieuwe visie op de gebeurtenissen die geleid hebben tot de Spaanse furie te Antwerpen op 4 november 1576', *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis 54* (1971), 31–54. A concise overview of events in Jervis Wegg, *The decline of Antwerp under Philip of Spain* (London, 1924), 189–206.

lamented their sudden imperilment at the hands of the Spanish.[54] Their movement was neither inimical to lordship nor hereditary nobility, but was so rooted in civic and provincial rights that it stoked sentiment about popular sovereignty and the rights of propertied subjects. Antwerp's sack in 1576 only highlighted the civic metaphors of resistance the patriots cherished. Its storyline of plunder, robbery, fire, and murder at the hands of looting soldiers centred around three themes: the destruction of the household and its goods, the murder and rape of its citizenry, and the loss of freedoms and liberties. The burning of Antwerp's *stadhuis* became a powerful metaphor of the Spanish campaign against civic rights. An English witness recounted how the mutineers set fire to it as he described the rape of Antwerp's women, as if to point out that the town hall and the family were inseparable strands of the double helix of public life:

> But I may not pass over with silence the wilful burning and destroying of the stately Town House, and all the muniments and records of the city: neither can I refrain to tell their shameful rapes and outrageous forces presented unto sundry honest dames and virgins.[55]

The sack of Antwerp, memorialised in popular prints, ballads, letters, and chronicles, was an indictment of Spanish tyranny and a brief on behalf of the family, domestic order, civic honour, and liberties and freedoms. The murderous Army of Flanders had attacked all of the principles underlying civic order and the public good.

If Mechelen, Naarden, Zutphen and Antwerp were heralded as examples of cities ravaged, Haarlem, Alkmaar and Leiden and their successful withstanding of sieges functioned as the patriotic retort, spawning verse and prose about heroic townspeople who repaired the frayed political order, fought back vigorously, and in their efforts summoned the highest *burgerlijcke* values of communal solidarity and pugnacity. Letters and chronicles told of men who soldiered bravely,

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[54] On the conceptual history of *patria* and fatherland and related patriotic semantics in the Low Countries, see Karin Tilmans, 'De ontwikkeling van een vaderland-begrip in de laat-middeleeuwse en vroeg-moderne geschiedschrijving van de Nederlanden', in *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis van de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*, ed. N.C.F. van Sas (Amsterdam, 1999), 7–53 and E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier, 'Het begrip "vaderland" in de Nederlandse geschiedschrijving van de late zestiende eeuw tot de eerste helft van de achtiende', in *Vaderland*, 163–180.

[55] George Gascoigne, *The Spoyle of Antwerpe, faithfully reported by a true Englishman, who was present at the same, November 1576*, in *Tudor tracts 1532–1588. An English garner*, ed. A.F. Pollard (Westminster/New York, 1903), 438.

aided by children and women who displayed martial prowess and manly skills.[56] Of the three, Leiden's took on mythic proportions—a foundational tale of civic heroism, redemption, and victory of metaphorical importance to the Revolt in its critical years and to the young United Provinces in the seventeenth century. Leiden was a critical test of a Revolt bathed in the language of civic order and virtuous citizenship, with its families and magistrates tested through the trial of a month-long siege and near starvation. It was also testament that urban resistance in some lucky cases yielded dividends and that the civic virtue of a united citizenry could triumph over superior force. The rhetorician Jan Fruytiers' eye-witness account of Leiden's suffering became the foundational narrative of this civic triumph, a stirring account of a city defended by a small, fiercely dedicated garrison of citizen soldiers, of townspeople bravely subsisting on malt cakes, horse meat and rats, of housewives tending to malnourished children, and of men and women invoking liberty against the injustice of tyranny.[57] Leiden's resistance was the triumph of the city itself, proof positive of how a city's experience of violence could be harnessed as a fundamental measurement of political identity. It gained value by its contrast to the fate of Mechelen, Zutphen, Naarden, and Antwerp, but shared with

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[56] Contemporary accounts include P. Sterlinckx, *Een corte waerachtige beschrijvinghe van alle geschiedenissen, aenslaghen, stormen, schermutsingen, ende schieten voor de vroome stadt Haarlem in Hollandt geschiedt (…) van 3 Dec. 1572 tot den 12 Sept. 1573* (Delft, 1573). On Alkmaar, see Ev. Wasdorp, *Het beleg der stede Alkmaar in 1573 naar aanteekeningen van ooggetuigen geschetst* (Arnhem, 1862); *Brieven en andere bescheiden rakende het beleg van Alkmaar in 1573 naar de oorpronkelijke stukken*, ed. J.J. de Gelder (Alkmaar, 1865); and Nanning van Foreest, *Een cort verhael van de strenghe belegheringe ende aftreck der Spangiaerden vande stadt Alemaer gheleghen in Holladt* (Delft, 1573), a Dutch translation of the Latin original, for which see the reprint and the introduction by Henk van Nierop, 'Alkmaar in de Opstand', in Nanning van Foreest, *Kort verhaal van het beleg van Alkmaar. Een ooggetuigenverslag*, ed. M. Joustra (Alkmaar, 2000), 7–18. For reprints of early accounts of Leiden's siege, see *De oude verhalen van het beleg en ontzet van Leiden*, ed. R. Fruin *et al.* (The Hague, 1874), including Fruytiers' famous *Corte beschryvinghe*. Both Alkmaar's and Leiden's sieges produced numerous commemorative ballads, the principal ones of which appeared in the published *Geuzenliedboek* and the others in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century chronicles: *Nederlandsche geschiedzangen,* ed. J. van Vloten, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1864), II, 49–66 for Alkmaar, and II, 131–142 for Leiden. Leiden's siege also was the subject of the 1606 play by the rhetorician Jacob Duym, *Benoude belegheringe der stad Leyden* (Leiden, 1606).

[57] *De oude verhalen* transcribes Johan Fruytiers' *Corte beschryvinghe*. On Fruytiers, see the entry 'Johan Fruytiers' in *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek*, ed. P.C. Molhuysen *et al.*, 10 vols. (Leiden, 1911–1937), VI, 526–529.

the tales from other cities how the trauma of war and violence brought into relief the bonds of civism and their political vulnerability.

Contemporaries of the Dutch Revolt were aware of the history of Burgundian urban penalties, their sting, and their political aim. In a letter of 30 May 1567, for example, Cardinal Granvelle's faithful correspondent Morillon urged Alba to consider punishing Antwerp as Ghent had been punished by Charles V in 1540.[58] In the main, however, explicit references to the earlier reprisals against rebellious towns in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century were rare, the experience of their violence registered instead in annals, letters, and chronicles, etched in local memory, and made plain in the daily appearance of the city and the political environment after its penalty or alteration. Still, the legacy of past urban sacks was plainly there—foreshadowing the narratives of chroniclers, eye-witnesses, pamphleteers, balladeers and graphic artists who decried the assault upon Dutch cities by Alba and his successors. And yet the history of these fifteenth- and sixteenth-century urban traumas has even wider importance. As more than one scholar has pointed out, the sixteenth-century Netherlands was no wellspring of republican theory.[59] Yet contemporaries did not depend upon texts to know that the area's entrenched urban traditions—and its history of urban dissent—nourished proto-republican sensibilities.[60] The political culture of the Dutch Revolt was more hybrid than neat categories of political thought can acknowledge, more improvised in its political course, and more indebted to traditions and customs that were the stuff of political practice and not bookish endeavour. The Burgundian practice of humbling cities by sacks and ritual testaments to their defeat began in the fifteenth century and grew with the imperial project of Charles V and his advisors. Fully applied to the Low Countries, the sack or humiliation of townspeople or other adversaries was practised elsewhere too, including Rome itself, as part of an equation that positioned princely triumph in relationship to urban defeat. The punishment of rebellious cities was one aspect of a broader

[58] *Correspondance du cardinal de Granvelle 1565–1586*, ed. E. Poullet and C. Piot, 12 vols. (Brussels, 1878-1897), II, 475.

[59] But cf. Karin Tilmans, 'Republican citizenship and civic humanism in the Burgundian-Habsburg Netherlands (1477–1566)', in *Republicanism. A shared European heritage*, I, 107–125, at 118-124.

[60] Tilmans, 'Republican citizenship', 110, 113, n. 5. See in particular, Van Gelderen, *Political thought* and also his 'Conceptions of liberty during the Dutch Revolt (1555–1590)', *Parliaments, Estates and representations* 7 (1987), 163–176.

conflict between imperial self fashioning, and local political identities, a clash between different concepts of the relationship between ruler and subject. In the Low Countries, these reprisals assumed a keener, more potent resonance because of the power of the urban landscape. Cities rid of their privileges and scarred by murder and pillage were testaments to the prince's ability to triumph. Given the brilliant glare of princely rituals that accompanied such defeats, it is harder to see their flipside: how the excessive violence of an urban sack make the lineaments of identity clear to the citizenry. What were intended as grand rituals of subjection performed by defeated subjects could instead become markers of citizenship itself and the civic principles that shaped the seventeenth-century commonwealth of the United Provinces.

CHAPTER TEN

IN DEFENCE OF THE COMMON FATHERLAND. PATRIOTISM AND LIBERTY IN THE LOW COUNTRIES, 1555–1576

Alastair Duke

In the summer of 1576, mutinous Spanish troops wrought mayhem in the loyalist provinces of Flanders and Brabant. The ensuing panic was aggravated because the Council of State, which had taken over the government after the sudden death of Requesens, was badly divided. In this crisis, the States of Brabant took matters into their own hands: they raised troops to protect Brussels from the mutineers and in early September summoned the States General on their own authority. Meanwhile, seemingly at the instigation of William of Orange and the States of Holland, all the members of the Council of State in Brussels, except the Spaniard Jeronimo de Roda, who got away to Antwerp, were arrested.[1] Until the arrival of Don John as viceroy in November, De Roda saw himself as the interim repository of royal authority in the Low Countries, and it was he who kept the king abreast of the worsening constitutional crisis.

On 10 October 1576, this Spaniard informed Philip II that the States had sent a delegation that day to make peace with William of Orange and the rebels. It was not the only scandal he had to report. To De Roda's utter amazement, the king's own vice-admiral had implicitly accepted the authority of the illegal States, but then, as the Spaniard explained, sarcastically, everyone now wanted to work for the common good of the *patrie* which was the *cosa grande* of the moment.[2] This was no exaggeration. Both Metsius, the loyalist bishop of 's Hertogenosch, in attendance at the States of Brabant, and a fugitive Augustinian

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[1] G. Janssens, *'Brabant in het verweer'. Loyale oppositie tegen Spanje's bewind in de Nederlanden van Alva tot Farnese (1567–1578)*, Standen en Landen 89 (Kortrijk-Heule, 1989), 296–297.

[2] *Correspondance de Philippe II sur les affaires des Pays-Bas,* ed. L.P. Gachard, 6 vols. (Brussels, 1848–1936), IV, 422.

canon, who kept a diary in faraway Amsterdam, separately testified to this concern for the 'fatherland' that autumn.[3] So pervasive did this patriotic discourse become that even Don John felt obliged to employ it. Having lost patience with the States and seized the castle at Namur, he wrote to the States General to justify his conduct. Here he complained that despite having played the part of 'a good patriot', malcontents had continually frustrated his best endeavours. Yet, he ended by declaring that he would observe the Pacification of Ghent, thereby showing himself, as he said, 'a better friend and lover of the fatherland than others who boasted and bragged' of their patriotism.[4]

In the autumn of 1576, all sorts of people in the Netherlands started calling themselves *vrays patriots* or *bons patriots*. In the face of the mutinous Spanish troops, it was natural that defence of the country should become the priority. Originally 'patriot' had simply meant a fellow-countryman or compatriot and carried no political connotations. In the second half of the sixteenth century, however, it also came to mean someone whose first loyalty was to the *patria*. Catherine de Medici used it in this sense when, on the eve of the civil wars in France, she reminded Coligny of his asseveration to be a *bon patri[ote]* and exhorted him therefore not to bring about the ruination of his country.[5] In the Low Countries, 'patriot' connoted someone who opposed Spanish tyranny and defended the privileges of the fatherland, if need be, against the prince. Because of its association with the Revolt, the term patriot was to remain, as Ernst Kossmann reminded us in 1963, an enduring if contentious part of the Dutch political vocabulary throughout the span of the Ancien Régime, as both Orangists and *staatsgezinden* laid claim at different times to be the 'true patriots'.[6] In late eighteenth-century Brabant, the defenders of the 'ancient constitution' against the root-and-branch reforms of Joseph II saw themselves

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[3] 'Écrit de l'évêque de Bois-le-Duc, Laurent Metsius, sur les causes, l'origine et le progrès des Troubles des Pays-Bas' in *Correspondance de Philippe II*, IV, 764; Wouter Jacobsz, *Dagboek van broeder Wouter Jacobsz (Gualtherius Jacobi Masius), prior van Stein. Amsterdam 1572–1578 en Montfoort 1578–1579*, ed. I.H. van Eeghen, 2 vols. (Groningen, 1959–1960), II, 160, entry for 6 October 1576.

[4] P. Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin en vervolgh der Nederlandsche oorlogen*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1679–1684), I, 836, 837.

[5] *Lettres de Catherine de Médicis*, ed. H. la Ferrière, 5 vols. (Paris, 1880–1896), I, 293. The editor extended the text. See also C. Beaune, *The birth of an ideology. Myths and symbols of nation in late-medieval France* (Berkeley, 1991), 4–5.

[6] E.H. Kossmann, *In praise of the Dutch Republic. Some seventeenth-century attitudes* (London, 1963), 8–11.

as upholding the liberties of Brabant in the same way as their 'loyalist' forebears two centuries earlier, and appropriated the same patriotic rhetoric.[7] Because the Revolt was the focus of so much international attention, it may have been the conduit by which the modern usage of *patriot* entered the German language[8] and possibly also English, transmitted through translated rebel pamphlets and diplomatic correspondence.[9]

The prominence of 'patriots' in the Revolt probably explains why, as one English scholar has noted, that term 'always possessed a faintly anti-monarchical flavour'.[10] Yet, what has been called by some 'constitutional patriotism' and by others 'a patriotism of liberty' did not originate in the Low Countries. According to Maurizo Viroli, this sort of patriotism, once a characteristic of the Roman Republic, was revived by the civic humanists, in the Quattrocento in their struggle against the Italian despots.[11] In the Holy Roman Empire, as Robert von Friedeburg has demonstrated, noblemen and town burghers' from the early sixteenth century also justified resistance to territorial princes and magistrates by emphasising the duty they owed to their *patria*.[12]

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[7] See G.M.H. van den Bossche, 'Historians as advisers to revolution? Imagining the Belgian nation', *History of European ideas* 24 (1998), 213–238.

[8] The German translation of the pamphlet *Le vray patriot*, published in Strassburg in 1579, took over the term 'patriot', see *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, ed. J. and W. Grimm, 17 vols. (Leipzig, 1854–1971), XII, s.v. 'Vaterland'. The Calvinists at Emden who resisted the absolutist tendencies of the local prince in the 1590s called themselves 'Patriots', see H. Schilling, 'Calvinism and civic liberties', in H. Schilling, *Civic Calvinism in northwestern Germany and the Netherlands. Sixteenth to nineteenth centuries*, Sixteenth century essays and studies 17 (Kirksville, 1991), 69.

[9] An English agent reported in 1577 that Granvelle's brother Champagny 'joyneth harde with them that are thought to be the best patriotes and lovers of their countrie', *Relations politiques des Pays-Bas et de l'Angleterre, sous le règne de Philippe II*, ed. J.M.B.C. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 11 vols. (Brussels, 1882–1900), IX, 333. The Oxford English Dictionary gives 1605 as the first recorded usage of 'patriot' in its modern sense. Hugh Dunthorne kindly advised me that his research on English pamphlets relating to the Revolt before 1609 suggested that 'patriot' was not then current, though the concept of 'patriotism' was of course familiar.

[10] M. Stoyle, *Soldiers and strangers. An ethnic history of the Civil War* (New Haven, 2005), 114. See also C. Cuttica, 'Sir Francis Kynaston. The importance of the "nation" for a 17th-century English royalist', *History of European ideas* 32 (2006), 139–161 at 150–153, though the author argues that English patriotism had not been quasi-republican in the late sixteenth century.

[11] M. Viroli, *For love of country. An essay on patriotism and nationalism* (Oxford, 1997), 7, 26–29.

[12] I am indebted to Robert von Friedeburg for making me aware of the significance of constitutional patriotism in the Empire. He has developed his thinking in various articles including 'In defence of patria. Resisting magistrates and the duties of patriots

Nevertheless, the sudden burgeoning of a comprehensive Netherlandish patriotism raises intriguing questions. What resonance had the 'common fatherland' for Netherlanders before the Revolt? To what degree was their patriotism inimical to monarchy? Was this patriotism simply an artifice of rebel propaganda, or had the experience of fighting, and dying, for the fatherland created a sense of Netherlandish nationhood? Why, despite earlier manifestations of constitutional patriotism elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire, did the name 'patriot' first catch on in the Low Countries? And, finally, how viable was this common fatherland?

In early modern Europe, the concepts of the fatherland and of the nation were defined both by law and by personal sentiment. Most obviously, the *patria* was one's place of birth. This might mean one's native village, but the locality was elastic, and so might stretch to the country in which one was born. The range depended on how far one was from one's homeland. A dictionary published in Antwerp in 1567 therefore glossed *patria* as 'the place, village or any other place where one has been born'.[13] The pluralistic nature of this *patria* appears from the musings of a sixteenth-century Cologne patrician on the location of his fatherland or, as he called it, the *Heimat*. Hermann von Weinsberg inhabited not just a single common and particular fatherland, but a hierarchy of 'fatherlands'. His starting point was his own household, and from here his *Heimat* extended outwards and upwards to his parish, his native town, the prince-bishopric of Cologne, and so on, to embrace eventually 'Deutzlant', the Holy Roman Empire, Christendom and, ultimately, heaven itself.[14]

The definition of the 'foreigner' or 'stranger' was no less complex. The king naturally distinguished between his subjects, i.e. those born within his various dominions and those born outside. To Philip II, neither Granvelle nor the Spanish soldiers in the Low Countries could

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in the Empire from the 1530s to the 1640s', *Sixteenth century journal* 32 (2001), 357–382; 'The problems of passions and of love of the fatherland in protestant thought. Melancthon to Althusius, 1520s to 1620s', *Culture and social history* 2 (2005), 81–98; 'The making of patriots. Love of fatherland and negotiating monarchy in seventeenth-century Germany', *Journal of modern history* 77 (2005), 881–916.

[13] S. Groenveld, '"Natie" en "patria" bij zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanders', in *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*, ed. N.C.F. van Sas (Amsterdam, 1999), 55–81, at 59.

[14] Hermann von Weinsberg, *Das Buch Weinsberg. Kölner Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. K. Höhlbaum, F. Lau and J. Stein, 5 vols. (Leipzig/Bonn, 1886–1926), V, 217–219.

be counted as foreigners because they were his subjects, though both the minister, who was from Franche-Comté, and the *tercios* were perceived as rank outsiders by Netherlanders.[15] Birth need not be decisive. In his *Apology*, William of Orange refuted the accusation of being a foreigner simply because he had been born outside the Habsburg Netherlands in Dillenburg. On that basis, as he pointed out, so too was the Spanish-born king. Orange declared he was far less a foreigner than Philip because he was descended from a dynasty that had possessed estates in the Low Countries since the eleventh century. Such a pedigree and record of service earned him the right to count the Netherlands as his fatherland.[16] More narrowly, a foreigner was anyone from another province. All the provinces had privileges preventing the appointment of foreigners as officeholders, though reciprocal recognition mitigated this restriction. Nevertheless, Brabanters were excluded from office in Holland and vice versa.[17] This multiplicity of fatherlands had its counterpart in a corresponding plethora of nations. In the Low Countries, the term *natio* was applied in the sixteenth century to a family unit, the inhabitants of a town, a corporation such as the Hanse, as well as to associations of university students, and persons belonging to a particular ethnic community.[18] The perception of so many 'fatherlands' and 'nations' hampered the recognition of the ethnic community as *the* fatherland or nation, and therefore prevented early modern national consciousness from acquiring the aggressive simplicity of modern nationalism. That was only possible once the French Revolution and its sister revolutionary movements had swept away the myriad privileged political communities and corporations that cluttered up the *ancien regime*.[19]

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[15] *Correspondance de Philippe II*, II, 224, 231; III, 585–586.

[16] A. Duke, 'William of Orange's Apology. A new annotated English translation', *Dutch crossing* 22 (1998), 3–96, at 30–32.

[17] *Resolutiën van de Staten van Holland en Westvriesland 1524–1793*, 278 vols. (s.l., s.d.) 30 and 31 March, and 8 August 1555.

[18] Groenveld, '"Natie" en "patria"', 61. For 'natie' as household see Godevaert van Haecht, *De kroniek van Godevaert van Haecht over de troebelen van 1565 tot 1574 te Antwerpen en elders*, ed. R. van Roosbroeck, 2 vols. (Antwerp, 1929–1930), I, 13, 16; as the Hanse, *Niederländische Akten und Urkunden zur Geschichte der Hanse und zur deutschen Seegeschichte*, ed. R. Häpke, 2 vols. (Munich/Leipzig, 1913–1923), I, 105.

[19] On the multiplicity of political communities in the Ancien Régime see L. Febvre, '*Frontière*. The word and the concept', in *A new kind of history from the writings of Lucien Febvre*, ed. P. Burke (London, 1973), 213–214.

Roman law recognised two fatherlands: everyone belonged to a particular *patria* where he had been born, while Rome was the 'common fatherland' of every *civis Romanus*.[20] On the analogy of imperial Rome, medieval French lawyers had argued that Frenchmen too had a 'common fatherland' located in Paris or, more mystically, in the crown of the kingdom. French national consciousness in the later middle ages therefore focussed on priest-kings, who traced their descent to Clovis, belief in the common fatherland of the kingdom, and the conviction that God had chosen the French people. As France became more centralised, early modern French patriotism, at least for the governing elite, grew more robust and straightforward. In principle, everyone had a clear duty to defend his country, which was becoming coterminous with the kingdom of France. Frenchmen were therefore *régnicoles* because they inhabited a kingdom.[21] They were also on the way to becoming citizens with an effectual French nationality—though that word was as yet unknown—and the French Crown had the prerogative to naturalise foreigners, in other words to make them French.[22]

For the inhabitants of the Low Countries, who did not inhabit a kingdom, the location of the fatherland and the matter of nationality were less straightforward. In contrast to France, citizenship was specifically confined to those inhabitants who had become town burghers, a status gained by fulfilling certain conditions.[23] Nor in law was there any such thing as a Netherlandish nationality, for it was the province in which one was born which determined one's nationality, and 'outlanders' or 'strangers' were therefore naturalised as Brabanters, Hollanders

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[20] Beaune, *Birth of an ideology*, 51; E.H. Kantorowicz, *The king's two bodies. A study in medieval political theology* (Princeton, 1957), 246–247.

[21] B. Guenée, 'État et nation en France au Moyen Âge', *Revue historique* 237 (1967), 17–30.

[22] P. Sahlins, 'La nationalité avant la lettre. Les pratiques de naturalisation en France sous l'Ancien Régime', *Annales. Histoire, sciences sociales* 55 (2000), 1081–1108. On the 'inchoate' but increasingly generalised character of citizenship in France before 1789 see R. Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge Mass., 1992), 37–38.

[23] P. Godding, *Le droit privé dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux du 12e au 18e siècle*, Académie royale de Belgique. Mémoires de la classe des lettres. Collection in 4o–2e série 14 (Brussels, 1987), 57–61; M. Prak, 'Burghers, citizens and popular politics in the Dutch Republic', *Eighteenth century studies* 30 (1996–1997), 443–448, at 444–445; M. Prak, 'Burghers into citizens. Urban and national citizenship in the Netherlands during the revolutionary era', *Theory and society* 26 (1997), 403–420.

or Namurois.[24] Nor should we forget that the province itself was a confederation. A Dutch scholar has vividly characterised the late medieval county of Holland as a 'coagulation' of smaller communities that were slowly congealing into a functioning political unit.[25] As late as the 1660s, that shrewd observer of government in the United Provinces, William Temple, commented 'that each of these Provinces is likewise composed of many little States or Cities, which have several marks of Soveraign Power within themselves'.[26]

Such entrenched particularism was a formidable brake on the growth of a Netherlandish consciousness before the Revolt. Yet, in circumstances that seemed hardly more propitious, German humanists had discovered the German Nation in the later fifteenth century, and this had led to the Empire being officially redefined in the later fifteenth century as the *heiliges römisches Reich teutscher Nation*.[27] This sense of nationhood derived in part from mistrust of the Roman Curia and of the Latin nations, but also from pride in German technological achievements, especially printing, and above all in the German language. When therefore French Renaissance scholars began to identify France with ancient Gaul and to argue that the kingdom should extend to the Rhine, German cosmographers riposted by defining Germany in linguistic terms: *Teutsch Landt* consisted of all the lands where the *Teutsch Zung* was spoken.[28] Ethno-cultural definitions were, however, singularly unhelpful in the case of the Low Countries, for

[24] On the naturalisation of aliens see Godding, *Le droit privé*, 65–69; J. Gillissen, 'Le statut des étrangers en Belgique du XIII^e^ au XX^e^ siècle', *Société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire comparative des institutions* 10 (1958), 231–331, at 246–254; H. Grotius, *The jurisprudence of Holland*, ed. R.W. Lee (Oxford, 1926), 56–57; F. Rousseau, 'La nationalité namuroise sous l'Ancien Régime', *Standen en landen* 22 (1961), 191–205. I am much indebted to Dr Deceulaer of the Algemeen Rijksarchief Brussels for advice on this issue.

[25] J.G. Smit, *Vorst en onderdaan. Studies over Holland en Zeeland in de late middeleeuwen* (Leuven, 1995), 485–506.

[26] W. Temple, *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands*, ed. G. Clark (Oxford, 1972), 52.

[27] C. Siebert-Lehmann, '"Teutsche Nation" und Eidgenossenschaft. Der Zusammenhang zwischen Türken- und Burgunderkriegen', *Historische Zeitschrift* 253 (1991), 561–602, at 571 and n. 32; also B. Schönemann, 'Frühe Neuzeit und 19. Jahrhundert', s.v. 'Volk, Nation, Nationalismus, Masse', in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck, 8 vols. (Stuttgart, 1972–1997), VII, 281–380, at 284–288.

[28] A. Demandt, 'Die Grenzen in der Geschichte Deutschlands', in *Deutschlands Grenzen in der Geschichte*, ed. A. Demandt (Munich, 1990), 9–32, at 15–16.

language could neither demarcate the country from its eastern[29] or southern neighbours, nor generate a viable name for the country or its inhabitants.

In the case of the Low Countries, the national consciousness could, however, be associated with a particular political culture because the Habsburg Netherlands, unlike the Empire, was a functioning state and politics mattered. In the Netherlands, the business of government was transacted de facto between the prince (or his representative) and the provincial States and the town corporations. It therefore called for, as Mary of Hungary wearily explained to her brother in 1555 'grande hantise avec un chascun', by which she meant bargaining with nobles and commons.[30] Guicciardini made the same point. When describing the negotiations that went on between Brussels and the delegations to the States General, he felt obliged to tell readers unfamiliar with the Low Countries that 'it is not the custom here, as it is elsewhere, [for the prince] to say "this is my wish, and therefore my command"'.[31]

Both Netherlanders and foreigners[32] characterised the country as a land of freedom. More than once during the wars with France, the government warned the States General that were the country to fall under French domination, Netherlanders would fall into the sort of servitude endured by the French, whose king could supposedly tax his subjects at will.[33] Of course, this was a piece of political scaremongering,

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[29] Low German mercenaries stationed at Utrecht in 1576, were described as 'compatriots', *La Furie espagnole. Documents pour servir à l'histoire du sac d'Anvers en 1576*, ed. P. Genard (Antwerp, 1876), 273.

[30] F. Postma, *Viglius van Aytta. De jaren met Granvelle, 1549–1564* (Zutphen, 2000), 265 n. 4; in 1562 Granvelle warned Philip II's secretary against peremptorily deploying troops from the Low Countries in France: the Netherlands were not like Italy or Milan and before issuing such 'absolute' commands, it was necessary to consult about what could be achieved, *Correspondance de Philippe II*, I, 207.

[31] L. Guicciardini, *Description de Tout le Païs-Bas, autrement dict la Germanie Inferieure ou Basse-Allemagne* (Antwerp, 1568), 53; *Beschrijvinghe van alle de Nederlanden; anderssins ghenoemt Neder-Duytslandt* (Amsterdam, 1612; facs. edn. Haarlem, 1979), 44. When Petrus Scriverius annotated Grotius, *De antiquitate reipublicum Batavavicae*, in 1630, he cited Guicciardini about the consultative character of the constitution, see H. Grotius, *The antiquity of the Batavian republic*, ed. J. Waszink (Assen, 2000), 143.

[32] Alba recognised how difficult it would be to suppress deeply rooted customs in the case of a people who were so 'free'. For his letter to the king, 6 January 1568, see E. Gossaert, 'Projets d'érection des Pays-Bas en royaume sous Philippe II', *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique, classe des lettres* (1900), 558–578, at 560.

[33] J. Bartier, 'Un discours du chancellier Hugonet aux États généraux de 1473', *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire* 107 (1942), 127–156, at 149–150; H.G.

intended to put pressure on the States, yet it would have been pointless had this perception of the differences between the two countries not been widespread. Since Germans as such did not threaten their country, Netherlanders had less reason to stereotype them. Yet, if we are to believe a Beggar song, written to deter Netherlanders from making peace with the Spanish enemy, they thought their eastern neighbours lived in a less free, more feudal society.[34] The song, after listing Spanish atrocities and reminding its readers how worthless a Spanish Pardon was, asks rhetorically whether in these circumstances they would really want to expel William of Orange and pay the Tenth Penny. In the penultimate stanza, there's ironic advice for those Netherlanders who were still minded to accept a Spanish Pardon:

> If you really want to be a serf,
> Then you don't need to learn Spanish,
> You're better off in Westphalia,
> People there really want bondsmen,
> And there they speak German.

The relatively free political culture of the Habsburg Netherlands was bound up with the privileges and the customs. Some legal practices struck the central government as absurd. When a councillor from Brussels was told that local privileges of Overijssel forbade the provincial governor from exercising judicial prerogatives, he angrily declared that such 'diabolical' privileges be changed. Local delegates who insisted on keeping the 'old customs', were told that these were 'wax noses' and that it was high time they were abolished.[35] Others, including ministers, feared the privileges demeaned the prince's prerogative. Charles V once complained to his brother Ferdinand that in the Low Countries everyone wanted privileges that contradicted his sovereignty 'as if I were their companion and not their lord'[36] and a Spanish noble accused the rebels at Ghent in 1539–40 of wanting to

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Koenigsberger, *Monarchies, States Generals and Parliaments. The Netherlands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries* (Cambridge, 2001), 148.

[34] *Het Geuzenliedboek naar de oude drukken*, ed. E.T. Kuiper and P. Leendertz, 2 vols. (Zutphen, 1924), I, 144. I am indebted to Elsa Strietman for advice on the translation.

[35] W. Nagge, *Historie van Overijssel*, ed. F.A. Hoeffer and J. Nanninga Uitterdijk, 2 vols. (Zwolle, 1908–1915; repr. 1975), II, 291; for the context see R. Reitsma, *Centrifugal and centripetal forces in the Dutch Republic. The States of Overijssel 1566–1600* (Amsterdam, 1982), 46–68.

[36] J. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, impresario of war* (Cambridge, 2002), 53.

establish a Venetian-style regime, so that the king would have become a mere figurehead.[37]

In fact, the privileges were usually precisely documented in charters, whose prosaic contents often fell short of public expectations. In times of political crisis, myths about the privileges easily fired the imagination of the common people, who greatly exaggerated their benefits.[38] A particular mystique attached to Brabant's charter, the *joyeuse entrée*, which went through three printings in the 1560s.[39] The so-called 'resistance article' excited huge attention in 1566. This article permitted the provincial States to withhold obedience from their prince for as long as he was in breach of the privileges he had sworn to maintain. In 1566 printed bills, dropped after dark in the streets of Brabant towns, claimed this article could be invoked against the inquisition and indeed the anti-heresy legislation.[40] In May that year, a Brussels guild embarrassed the magistrates by insisting that since the king had not kept his word, they could withhold obedience and demanded that the article in question be read out at their meeting.[41] The *joyeuse entrée* of course applied only to Brabant, but early on in the Revolt the opposition argued that since the duchy was the foremost province in the

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[37] *Papiers d'État du cardinal de Granvelle*, ed. C. Weiss, 9 vols. (Paris, 1841–1852), IV, 83. Later a jurist from Artois claimed Orange wanted to convert the king into a doge, *Mémoires des Pontus Payen*, ed. A. Henne, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1860), I, 86.

[38] During the revolt at Ghent of 1539–1540, rumour had it that there existed a charter known as the *Purchase* or *Redemption of Flanders*. This supposedly exempted the townspeople in perpetuity from paying taxes because their forebears had redeemed Flanders after a count had gambled the territory away. When a search for this charter proved fruitless, the lower orders turned on the magistrates, accusing them of having concealed it. P. Arnade, 'Privileges and the political imagination in the Ghent revolt of 1539', in *Charles V in context. The making of a European identity*, ed. M. Boone and M. Demoor (Ghent, 2003), 103–124, at 113–115. During political crises in the towns of Holland in 1672 and 1747–1748 the commons levelled similar accusations against the magistrates, when privileges which would have provided support for popular claims could not be found, J. Woltjer, 'Dutch privileges, real and imaginary', in *Britain and the Netherlands. Volume V. Some political mythologies*, ed. J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann (The Hague, 1975), 19–35, at 33.

[39] H. de la Fontaine Verwey, 'De Blijde Inkomst en de opstand tegen Philips II', in H. de la Fontaine Verwey, *Uit de wereld van het boek. I. Humanisten, dwepers en rebellen in de zestiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1975), 113–132, at 118–119.

[40] *Typographia Batava, 1541–1600*, ed. P. Valkema Blouw, 2 vols. (Nieuwkoop, 1998), nr. 1500; see also *Kroniek van Godevaert van Haecht*, I, 44–45.

[41] *Mémoires de Jacques de Wesenbeke*, ed. C. Rahlenbeck (Brussels, 1859), 150; *Correspondance du cardinal Granvelle*, ed. E. Poullet and C. Piot, 12 vols. (Brussels, 1877–1896), I, 247.

Netherlands, its privilege pertained to all the provinces,[42] and in the later 1570s the rebels tried to give legal effect to this wishful thinking.[43]

Nothing promotes national cohesion so much as confrontation with a common enemy. For Germans, *die Welschen*, a conveniently flexible category of villains that included Italian prelates, Burgundians and Spaniards, served this purpose.[44] In the Low Countries, the French had since the outbreak of hostilities in the 1460s become the arch-enemy. This antagonism, which the Habsburg-Valois wars reinforced, ran deepest in Flanders and the Walloon provinces. Here the animosity against the French was so blatant that when Charles V entered Valenciennes in 1540 in the company of the future Henry II, the magistrates had hurriedly to issue a proclamation forbidding anyone on pain of death to make offensive remarks about the French.[45] The visceral nature of this hatred appears from the account of an anonymous Flemish chronicler about the victory over the French at Grevelingen in 1558. After the battle, Flemish women ran about the field, stabbing wounded French soldiers with their pitchforks.[46] Later, this deep-seated anti-French prejudice contributed to the collapse of Orange's Anjou policy in the southern provinces.

The defining enmity for the Netherlands became, of course, that of Spain. Yet anti-Spanish feeling took root here later than in Germany, where the intervention of Alba and Spanish soldiers in the Schmalkaldic Wars had launched the 'Black Legend' among German Evangelicals. From the early sixteenth century, quite large numbers of Spanish troops

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[42] When Gilles le Clercq alleged the anti-heresy edicts in 1566 violated legal privileges, he cited the article of the *Joyeuse Entrée* in extenso without mentioning its limited validity, J.W. te Water, *Historie van het verbond en de smeekschriften der Nederlandsche edelen*, 4 vols. (Middelburg, 1776–1796), IV, 125.

[43] See Fontaine Verwey, 'De Blijde Inkomst', 120–128. For the application of the privilege to the Netherlands as a whole, see *Texts concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands*, ed. E.H. Kossmann and A.F. Mellink (Cambridge, 1974), 87, 199, 209. In a memorandum written about 1 February 1577, Orange urged that the *Joyeuse Entrée* be extended to all the provinces, The National Archives, Public Record Office State Papers, nr. 70/143, f. 272. I am indebted to Guido Marnef for bringing this document to my attention.

[44] J. Pollmann, *Een naturelicke vijantschap* (Amsterdam, unpublished doctoral thesis, 1990), 17–18; *Historischen Volkslieder der Deutschen vom 13. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. R. von Liliencron, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1865–1869), II, nr. 520, 522, 524, 529, 530.

[45] *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*, ed. L.P. Gachard and C. Piot, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1874–1884), II, 591–592.

[46] *Chroniques de Brabant et de Flandre*, ed. C. Piot (Brussels, 1879), 329. Guiccardini described the inhabitants of Artois as mortal enemies of the French, *Description de Tout le Païs-Bas*, 335.

served now and again in the Low Countries, initially without apparent incident. Attitudes changed after the mid-1540s, when their numbers rose sharply and mutinies multiplied.[47] This prejudice against ill-disciplined Spanish soldiers coincided with a sudden surge of anxiety about the Spanish Inquisition, and the two elements became conflated and confused.

The international Protestant bush telegraph had buzzed with rumours about the introduction of the Spanish Inquisition in the Low Countries in 1550, but these then subsided. In 1559 the angst about the Spanish Inquisition returned to stalk the Netherlands, this time to remain. When Philip II delayed the recall of the Spanish soldiers after Cateau-Cambrésis, report had it that these would foist just such an inquisition on the country.[48] Nor did the soldiers' withdrawal in 1561 quell those suspicions, for the re-organisation of the bishoprics was seen as a device to introduce an inquisition by stealth. Feelings ran highest in Antwerp where by the mid-sixteenth century there were fears that anti-heresy measures would deter foreign Protestant merchants. People believed that 'where the inquisition treads, the merchant departs'.[49] No matter how often or categorically the king denied any intention of introducing a Spanish-style inquisition, he could not kill the rumours.[50]

Granvelle told the king's secretary at the end of 1560 that the inhabitants of the Low Countries now regarded the Spanish as a threat to their liberty, for which they were prepared to die.[51] By then, public opinion no longer supported the rigorous implementation of the anti-heresy legislation demanded by the king.[52] In the years after Charles V's

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[47] R. Fagel, *De Hispano-Vlaamse wereld. De contacten tussen Spanjaarden en Nederlanders 1496–1555* (Brussels/Nijmegen, 1996), 382–400.

[48] See *Correspondentie van Willem den Eerste, Prins van Oranje*, ed. N. Japikse (The Hague, 1934), 143; also Duke, 'William of Orange's Apology', 87, n. 48.

[49] *Remonstrance a la majeste du roy catholique faite par ses sujets des pays bas, sur les inconveniens qui se presentent, par l'establissement de l'inquisition d'Espagne (…) de la duché de Brabant* ([Antwerp?], 1566), 14.

[50] M. Dierickx, *De oprichting der nieuwe bisdommen in de Nederlanden onder Filips II 1559–1570* (Antwerp/Utrecht, 1950), 155–160; *Correspondance du cardinal Granvelle*, I, 102–103, 148; F.E. Beemon, 'The myth of the Spanish Inquisition and the preconditions for the Dutch Revolt', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 85 (1994), 246–264, at 251–255.

[51] *Correspondance de Philippe II*, I, 192.

[52] J. Woltjer, 'Public opinion and the persecution of heretics in the Netherlands, 1550–1559', in *Public opinion and changing identities in the early modern Netherlands*, ed. J. Pollmann and A. Spicer (Leiden, 2007), 87–106, at 106.

abdication, several of the grandees became estranged from their king. They complained that they had not been adequately rewarded for their services in the recent wars and, more generally, that he put Spanish interests ahead of those of the Low Countries.[53] When Philip II left for Spain in August 1559, the French ambassador in Brussels thought the leading nobles were glad to see him go.[54]

Whereas anti-French feeling was concentrated in the border provinces, anti-Spanish sentiment was, because of its association with the 'inquisition', more widely diffused. By 1566, the term 'inquisition' had become an emotive catch-all. It evoked Titelmans' zealous ecclesiastical inquisition in Flanders, meddlesome government commissions in the Walloon towns, the anti-heresy edicts themselves and in Antwerp the nightmare of paid informers, anonymous delations and secret trials.[55] Where the Protestant Reformation had put down roots in the towns of Brabant, Flanders and Wallonia, the anxiety about the 'inquisition' reached the common man. A crude handbill, posted on the gates of Antwerp in early March 1562, gives an insight into the anti-Spanish mood. It accused Granvelle of seeking to deprive Brabant 'of its liberty…and make the inhabitants the slaves of Spanish pigs'.[56] In an endeavour to dispel the rising Hispanophobia, the Cardinal urged the king to distribute honours in the Spanish military orders and high offices in Italy to grandees from the Low Countries in order to show he was indeed 'the common master of all'.[57]

At the same time as this anti-Spanish feeling was gathering pace, the perception of the Netherlands as a single political community was growing stronger. This was in part the consequence of the political integration achieved under Charles V. Then, the central government had assumed legislative functions previously discharged by local bodies and had begun to publish uniform edicts on heresy in all provinces as well as on such other matters as coinage and the conduct of trade.

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[53] A. Louant, 'Charles de Lalaing et les remonstrances d'Emmanuel-Philibert de Savoie (juillet et novembre 1556)', *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire* 97 (1933), 255–269; F. Strada, *De thien eerste boecken der Nederlandsche Oorloge* (Amsterdam, 1646), 102. Cf. *Relations politiques des Pays-Bas et de l'Angleterre,* I, 101–102.

[54] *Relations des ambassadeurs vénitiens sur Charles-Quint et Philippe II*, ed. L.P. Gachard (Brussels, 1856), 87–88, 87 n. 1.

[55] A. Duke, 'Salvation by coercion. The controversy surrounding the "Inquisition" in the Low Countries on the eve of the Revolt', in A. Duke, *Reformation and revolt in the Low Counties* (London, 1990), 152–174, at 170.

[56] *Relations politiques des Pays-Bas et de l'Angleterre,* II, 675–676.

[57] E.g. *Papiers d'État*, VI, 206; VII, 53–55, 152–154.

Civil justice was also overhauled and increasingly suitors looked to the high court at Mechelen for authoritative judgements. Again, the reorganisation of the bishoprics after 1559 was a major step towards the creation of a 'national' ecclesiastical structure, where jurisdictions and boundaries coincided more closely with those of the state.[58] In a settlement advantageous to the Habsburg Netherlands, the transaction of Augsburg of 1548 established the Low Countries' virtual independence vis-à-vis the Empire. The Pragmatic Sanction or fundamental law concluded a year later put the seal on the dynastic unity of the country, when all the provinces adopted a uniform law of hereditary succession to ensure they would henceforth all acknowledge the same prince. Officially, as a *stadhouder* of Friesland tried to convince the truculent provincial States, the Habsburg Netherlands now constituted 'one single body or entity'.[59]

This greater political unity facilitated a semi-national consciousness, but it came in fits and starts. There had been occasions in the past when the provinces had emphasised their mutual solidarity. Indeed, one scholar, writing about a reciprocal treaty of 1339 between the towns of Flanders and Brabant, has claimed that the Burgundian dukes 'only combined [territories] that already felt they had much in common'.[60] Yet, this spurt of solidarity, like others, faded when the crisis passed. The States General that helped to rally the Burgundian Netherlands against France after 1477 snubbed the efforts of Mary of Hungary in the 1530s to create a defensive union with a standing army.

The elaborate celebrations to mark the inauguration of Prince Philip in 1549 contained coy expressions of this national awareness. Among the pageants staged to do homage to Prince Philip, were groups of

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[58] For Habsburg state-building see H. de Schepper, *'Belgium Nostrum' 1500–1550. Over integratie en desintegratie van het Nederland* (Antwerp, 1987); P.P.J.L. van Peteghem, *De Raad van Vlaanderen en staatsvorming onder Karel V (1515–1555). Een publiekrechtelijk onderzoek naar centralisatiestreven in de XVII Provinciën* (Nijmegen, 1990); J.-M. Cauchies and H. de Schepper, *Justice, grâce et législation. Genèse de l'état et moyens juridiques dans les Pays-Bas, 1200–1600*, Cahiers Centre de recherches en histoire du droit et des institutions 2 (Brussels, 1994); F. Postma, *Viglius van Aytta als humanist en diplomaat* (Zutphen, 1983); Postma, *Viglius van Aytta. De jaren met Granvelle*.

[59] J.S. Theissen, *Centraal gezag en Friesche vrijheid* (Groningen, 1907), 396.

[60] P. Avonds, 'Beschouwingen over het ontstaan en de evolutie van het samenhorigheidsgevoel in de Nederlanden (14de-19de eeuw)', in *Cultuurgeschiedenis in de Nederlanden van de Renaissance naar de Romantiek. Liber amicorum J. Andriessen S.J., A. Keersmaekers, P. Lenders S.J.*, ed. R. van Uytven *et al.* (Leuven/Amersfoort, 1986), 45–58, at 45.

maidens, sporting provincial armorials, who symbolised the unity of the country. At Douai the Low Countries was symbolised by a single maiden entitled *Gallia Belgica*, the earliest such representation of which I know.[61] Maps could also express patriotic pride and when in 1557 the Antwerp printer Hieronymous Cock published the very first outline map of the Low Countries, he claimed to have been moved by just such considerations. For the substantial outlay of six *stuivers*, one could now visualise this 'single body' in the comfort of one's own home.[62]

A more striking expression of Netherlandishness was the publication in 1567 of the very first chorography to be devoted to the description of 'all the Low Countries' as the Netherlands were becoming known. Guicciardini's handsome folio was a considerable success; the first Dutch edition, which curiously did not appear until 1612, was preceded by four editions in Italian, another four in French, and one each in German and English.[63] Although a Florentine by birth, Ludovico had gone as a young man to Antwerp, where he spent virtually the rest of his life. While he made no secret of his admiration for the artistic and technical skills of the inhabitants of the Low Countries, he gave pride of place to his adopted city, on which he lavished more attention than on the entire county of Flanders. In the States General, Brabant traditionally took precedence because the dukes claimed descent from Trojans and Charlemagne.[64] By the time of the Revolt, however, Brabant had no need of such props, for the duchy had by then indisputably supplanted Flanders.

Distance from the homeland can change perspectives, and Reformed Protestants who had taken refuge since the 1550s abroad were inclined

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[61] Juan Christoval Calvete de Estrella, *Le très-heureux Voyage fait par (…) prince Don Philippe*, ed. and trans. J. Petit, 5 vols. (Brussels, 1873–1884), esp. II, 81, 123; III, 50; for 'Gallia Belgica', III, 33. The Spanish original was published at Antwerp in 1552.

[62] H.A.M. van der Heijden, *Oude kaarten der Nederlanden 1548–1794. Historische beschouwing, kaartbeschrijving, afbeelding en commentaar*, 2 vols. (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1998), I, 57–66; II, 142–143. A hand coloured version cost twice as much.

[63] See *Repertorium van geschiedschrijvers in Nederland 1500–1800*, ed. E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier and G.A.C. van der Lem (The Hague, 1990), 164.

[64] R. Stein, 'Nationale identeiten in de late middeleeuwen. Een verkenning', *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 28 (2002), 222–246, at 230. For Antwerp and Brabant as the centres of a 'national' culture see K. Bostoen, 'Nation und Literatur in den Niederlanden der frühen Neuzeit', in *Nation und Literatur in Europa der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. K. Garber (Tübingen, 1989), 554–575.

to look upon the Low Countries as a whole. The earliest known description of the 'entire Netherlands' as 'our Fatherland' occurs in the preface to Marten Micron's Reformed church order printed at Emden in 1554. To Micron the Dutch stranger church in London was an instrument to bring the Gospel to 'our entire Netherlands', then languishing in an 'Egyptian slavery'.[65] Micron's biblically-inspired vision of his fatherland may have been uncommon, but by 1565 other Netherlanders sensed that the prosperity of the entire country was menaced by some nightmarish 'inquisition'. This 'national' threat called for a 'national' response.

When it became known in mid-November 1565 that Philip II had refused to modify his repressive religious policy, a small group of mostly Protestant gentry formed a confederation to muster support for the abolition of the inquisition 'in whatever shape, open or covert, under whatever disguise or mask it may assume'.[66] Meanwhile the inhabitants in the towns of Brabant were bombarded with handbills which denounced the 'inquisition' and branded those who assisted it as traitors. On 5 April 1566, the confederate gentry presented their petition, in which they asked the king to devise a new religious policy with the advice and consent of the States General. Originally, the Confederation had a limited agenda—it pointedly did not call for religious tolerance lest that would alienate Catholics—and its leader Brederode had the nebulous but high-sounding title of the 'Restorer of lost liberty'.[67]

Three days later the gentry, who had thought initially of calling themselves the 'Union of Nobles'[68] enthusiastically adopted the enigmatic name of the 'Beggars'. Almost overnight, the gentry's carefully choreographed protest mushroomed into a mass religious movement, while Brederode became 'the Great Beggar' and the darling of the Calvinists. The huge crowds who turned out to hear the Calvinist preachers that summer probably led him and other Protestant confederates to overestimate the depth of popular support for Reformed Protestantism. Certainly, the phenomenon of the *hagepreken*, or open air services,

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[65] M. Micron, *De christelicke ordinancien der Nederlantscher ghemeenten te Londen*, ed. W.F. Dankbaar (The Hague, 1956), 35, 36, 37. The Ghent Calvinist Jan Utenhove also spoke of 'onsen Nederlandschen Vaderlande' in 1561, S.J. Lenselink, *De nederlandse psalmberijmingen van de Souterliedekens tot Datheen* (Assen, 1959), 370, 515.

[66] *Texts concerning the Revolt*, 60.

[67] Strada, *De thien eerste boecken*, 277–278.

[68] Strada, *De thien eerste boecken*, 277–278.

alarmed Catholic members of the Confederation, who now backed away.[69] The iconoclastic riots and Brederode's maverick conduct completed the alienation. After the atrocities committed by the so-called 'wild' Beggars in Flanders and the 'Sea Beggars' in Holland, the name of 'Beggar' only aroused fear and loathing in Catholic hearts.[70] Though bitter anti-papists on the rebel side continued to revel in the Beggar legacy, William of Orange was careful to distance himself from it. Significantly, when he invaded in 1572, his soldiers made a point of presenting themselves as 'defenders of the fatherland', and explicitly rejected the Beggars' name.[71]

By the summer of 1567, the politico-religious opposition that twelve months earlier had seemed triumphant was completely vanquished. Brederode was in Cleves, dreaming of invasions for which he had no money, William of Orange was back in Dillenburg awaiting events, while Alba was entrenched in the Netherlands, with an army of ten thousand Spanish soldiers. Yet by March 1568 Orange found himself driven, mainly for personal reasons, to take up arms.[72] For that purpose, he rebuilt an admittedly fragile coalition of Catholics and Protestants and even managed to enlist support in Germany for the venture. In the circumstances, it was a remarkable achievement.

To do it, Orange had to represent his campaign as one to rescue the 'common fatherland' from Spanish tyranny, and in particular Alba. This patriotic rhetoric was not Orange's brainchild. The Confederates had earlier been applauded as 'defenders of the freedom of the fatherland' before they had become too closely aligned with the Calvinists.[73] The arrival of the Army of Flanders and Alba's determination not only to punish the rebels, but also to undertake a root-and-branch reform of the country had, however, given a new urgency to this agenda. This is evident from a compact signed by survivors of the original Confederation late in 1567, well before Orange took up the armed

[69] *Archives ou correspondance inédite de la maison d'Orange-Nassau*, ed. G. Groen van Prinsterer, 8 vols. (Leiden, 1841–1847), II, 153–154.

[70] In Flanders 'geus' long remained a strong pejorative: naughty children were chastised as 'geuzen', s.v. 'geus' in *Kortrijks woordenboek*, ed. F. Debrabandere (Kortrijk, 1999) and *Westvlaamsch idioticon*, ed. L.L. de Bo (Bruges, 1873).

[71] *Kroniek van Godevaert van Haecht*, II, 199.

[72] K.W. Swart, 'Wat bewoog Willem van Oranje de strijd tegen de Spaanse overheersing aan te binden?', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 99 (1984), 554–572.

[73] Strada, *De thien eerste boecken*, 292.

struggle.[74] The signatories swore to do all they could to restore 'our Fatherland with the Freedom and Liberty of the same' and to give peace to 'all the poor oppressed and banished people'. Alba, here described for good measure as an 'accursed Marrano' and 'our Morisco enemy', and his Spaniards were accused of seeking to dispossess the inhabitants of the Netherlands. Their sole intention was 'to make us all poor and everlasting slaves' and to bring 'these our fatherlands into conformity with the New Indies', in other words to treat the Netherlanders as a conquered people. As we know, dissident propaganda was already talking darkly about Netherlanders being enslaved in the early 1560s, but at that time the threat came from a phantom 'Spanish Inquisition'. It now came from the barrel of a musket, so to speak, from a Spanish captain-general and Spanish *tercios* who were billeted on the civilian population.

To foster a comprehensive Netherlandish consciousness, Orange and the rebel publicists deliberately invoked 'the whole Netherlands', 'the common fatherland', and addressed their proclamations to 'lovers of the liberties of the fatherland'. Netherlanders were sternly and repeatedly reminded of the obligations they owed to this fatherland. The prince, frustrated by the failure of the towns to come out in his support in 1568, made strenuous efforts in 1570 to arouse the inhabitants from their torpor. A typical Orangist commission at that time called on the people to rise up against the oppressor in order to ensure the 'well-being, freedom and law of your dear fatherland as well as your own welfare, life, your wife, children, property and [that of your] heirs'.[75] Another proclamation reminded Netherlanders that Orange had done his utmost in 1568 to expel the 'foreign oppressors of the dear fatherland', while his agents endeavoured to raise loans to meet the cost of 'delivering the fatherland'.[76]

Possibly, this patriotic rhetoric about the duty of *amateurs de la patrie* to defend the 'common fatherland' against tyranny derived from

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[74] Te Water, *Historie van het verbond*, IV, 60–67. See also Pollmann, *Een naturelicke vijantschap*, 73–74. The text derives from a later transcript published in the eighteenth century.

[75] *Correspondance du prince avec Jacques de Wesenbeke*, ed. J.F van Someren (Utrecht/Amsterdam, 1896), 12.

[76] *Correspondance du prince avec Jacques de Wesenbeke*, 67, 121.

German sources.[77] Judith Pollmann and Paul Regan have demonstrated the similarities between the vocabulary of German Lutherans during the Schmalkaldic Wars and that deployed in the Low Countries twenty or so years later.[78] In both German and Netherlandish texts the 'fatherland' was apostrophised in identical terms as 'poor', 'dear', 'free', 'noble' and 'common', while *gansche Nederlanden* replicates the earlier *ganz Teutschland*. Besides, in both cases the threat to the 'fatherland' came from Spain.

When canvassing for support from German evangelical princes, it was then only natural that Orange and the rebels should tap into the anti-Spanish prejudice in the Empire. But that was by no means the only or even the chief reason why they nurtured the Black Legend. Fear of Spain had the best potential to bind together the fissiparous territories. In 1568, the prince alleged that the Spanish had been plotting for more than fifty years to get control of the prosperous Netherlands to exploit it as they had done elsewhere. The privileges had prevented this but the Spaniards had not given up. Then, Granvelle and his henchmen had used subterfuges to achieve their purposes. They had used 'bloody edicts' and the 'intolerable Inquisition' to enslave consciences as well as persons and property, thus robbing them of all their privileges, on the pretext that the king's sovereignty and the faith were at risk.[79] Four years later, writing to Enkhuizen, the prince reminded the townsmen of the 'ancient hatred and envy of the Spaniards, which they have nursed in their hearts for many years against the entire Netherlands'.[80] To the Orangist commander, Johan van der Does, the fact that the

[77] Expressions such as 'gemeynen Nederlanden' and 'gemeyne Niderlandt' were rare before 1568 but see 'Vertoogschriften aen het magistraet der stad Antwerpen ingediend in de jaren 1564 en 1565, wegens de inquisitie', *Belgisch museum voor de nederduitsche taal- en letterkunde en de geschiedenis des vaderlands* 4 (1840), 225–239, at 229; *Archives ou correspondance inédite*, III, 145.

[78] J. Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft. Ursprung und Funktion der Schwarzen Legende über Spanien in den Niederlanden, 1560–1581', in *Feindbilder. Die Darstellung des Gegners in der politischen Publizistik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, ed. F. Bosbach (Cologne, 1992), 73–93, at 78–81; P. Regan, *The construction of patriotic sentiment in the sixteenth-century Low Countries. Cartography, Calvinism and rebel propaganda* (Southampton, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1995), 221–227. See also Von Friedeburg, 'In defense of the patria', 367–369.

[79] 'Waerschouwinghe des Princen van Oraengien aende inghesetenen ende ondersaten van den Nederlanden' in *Prins Willem van Oranje. Geschriften van 1568*, ed. M.G. Schenk (Amsterdam, 1933), 121.

[80] *Correspondence de Guillaume le Taciturne*, ed. L.P. Gachard, 6 vols. (Brussels, 1847–1866), III, 53–54.

captain who directed the siege against Leiden was a Spaniard made him *ipso facto* 'a sworn and perpetual enemy' of the country.[81] The *Geuzenliederen*, which endlessly recycled tales of Spanish massacres at Mechelen, Zutphen, Naarden, Antwerp and elsewhere, nourished these prejudices at the grass-roots.[82]

Hispanophobia reached fever pitch in 1576 with the mutinies and, fittingly, that autumn saw the birth of the Patriots, as Orange's supporters in Brabant called themselves. Quite when or how the name arose is uncertain. Metsius says that on 5 September, the day after the arrest of the Council of State, seditious persons who called themselves 'vrays patriots' sought approval for their *coup d'état*.[83] This suggests the name was already current, but as the bishop was writing some time after the events, we cannot be sure. The prince himself may have been the catalyst. Usually when corresponding with representative assemblies, he signed off as 'your very good friend at your service'. Yet, when writing from Zeeland to the States of Brabant, Flanders and Hainault on 3 October 1576 Orange ended with 'your most affectionate friend and patriot at your service'[84] and he continued to use this valedictory formula, which he reserved for his correspondence with the States General, until September 1579, when he reverted to his customary 'your very good friend at your service'. If 'patriot' were already in use in early September, then Orange may simply have wanted to align himself with those who now called themselves 'patriots'. Alternatively, he may have wanted to emphasise his status as a compatriot Netherlander, and in particular one with long standing ties to Brabant.

Certainly, Orange's use of 'patriot' attracted attention at the time. Metsius noted with some irritation that Orange was always signing his letters to the States as 'your friend and true patriot'.[85] Metsius accused the prince, who claimed to be 'the sole advocate and defender of the liberty of the *patrie*', of manipulating the anti-Spanish backlash in the loyalist provinces.[86] To the supporters of Orange in the southern

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[81] L.G. V(isscher), 'Over de belegering van Leiden en het kapiteinschap van Johan van der Does, 1574', *Kronijk van het historisch genootschap* 2 (1846), 150–161, at 152.

[82] On these and other ballads see L.P. Grijp, 'Van geuzenlied tot *Gedenck-clanck*', *De zeventiende eeuw* 10 (1994), 118–132 and 266–276; E.K. Grootes, 'Liedjes over de tachtigjarige oorlog', *De zeventiende eeuw* 13 (1997), 173–181.

[83] 'Écrit de l'évêque de Bois-le-Duc' in *Correspondance de Philippe II*, IV, 752.

[84] *Correspondence de Guillaume le Taciturne*, III, 120.

[85] 'Écrit de l'évêque de Bois-le-Duc' in *Correspondance de Philippe II*, IV, 744.

[86] 'Écrit de l'évêque de Bois-le-Duc' in *Correspondance de Philippe II*, IV, 743.

provinces the sobriquet 'patriot' was a godsend. In the first place, it replaced 'Beggar', which had become, as Wouter Jacobsz noted in his diary on 6 October 1576, 'very odious to men of discernment because of [the Beggars] boundless villainy'.[87] And, whereas the whimsical name of the 'Beggars' had given no clue as to that movement's agenda, that of 'patriot' was both transparent and honourable. Giving one's life for one's country had a pedigree that reached back to Horace.

As I mentioned at the outset, patriot was first used in the sense of one who loves his country in France on the eve of the civil wars. It did not, however, catch on there because patriotic Frenchmen were already known as *bons français* and like-minded Bretons and Burgundians were similarly described.[88] Because the title *bons patriots* left open the location of the *patria*, Brabanters or Hollanders, who would have objected to being saluted as *bons flamands*, at least in the Low Countries, could appropriate the name. This reminds us that there was a dearth of universally acceptable names for the inhabitants of the Low Countries. Netherlander was coming into circulation, but it had two defects. First, since Rhinelanders were still also so called, the name was insufficiently specific. Secondly, there was no French equivalent for *Nederlander*, the name *Pays-Bas* having failed to generate either a name for the inhabitants of the Low Countries, or an adjective. *Belgica* and its erudite progeny *Belgeois*[89] lacked street credibility. The name 'patriot' therefore both met a need and neatly circumvented these semantic pitfalls.

This foray into the obstreperous nomenclature of the early modern Netherlands illustrates the country's complex character, a complexity which hindered the construction of a robust notion of a common fatherland. There was an irreducible pluralism about the Habsburg Netherlands that defied simplification. Charles V recognised this. According to Guicciardini, the emperor gave up the idea of converting the Low Countries into a kingdom when he realised the provinces

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[87] Wouter Jacobsz, *Dagboek*, II, 600. Though the entry refers to the 'States' party, not the 'patriots', the sense is clear.

[88] M. Jones, '"Bons bretons et bons francoys". The language and meaning of treason in later medieval France', *Transactions of the Royal historical society* 5th series 32 (1982), 91–112, at 108.

[89] In 1602 an 'amateur de la patrie' from the Southern Netherlands did begin his appeal to the rebel provinces for peace with the cri-de-coeur: 'Nous sommes patriotz, Belgeois, frères et soeurs, amys et parens, voires une mesme chair', but it struck no chord, J. Stengers, 'La genèse du sentiment nationale belge', in *1585: op gescheiden wegen. Acta colloquii Bruxellensis 22–23 XI 1985*, ed. J. Craeybeckx, F. Daelemans and F.G. Scheelings (Leuven, 1988), 237–251, at 244.

would not forgo their own laws and privileges and accept what the Florentine calls 'a royal and common system of law'.[90]

Late medieval chroniclers had usually taken the territory or region as their framework, and with the partial exception of the court historiographers, they did not regard the Low Countries as a whole, as a subject for historical study. Their readership too seems to have been culturally restricted: very few chronicles in Dutch or French crossed the language divide.[91] Until Guicciardini no one attempted a 'master narrative' for the Low Countries. When in the 1570s the notion of the whole fatherland rose to prominence, it had to live alongside mature pre-existing provincial identities. Moreover, because of the political circumstances, the identity of the common fatherland had to be built if not in outright opposition to the prince, at least without his participation. Nor, because of the confessional conflict, could religion inspire a national consciousness as it did, for example, in Elizabethan England. Orange tried desperately to take religion out of the equation by pressing for a *religievrede*, though this was acceptable to neither the Calvinist regime in Ghent nor the vehemently Catholic States of Artois, whose members were appalled when Marnix told them in 1578 that 'the purpose of the war was to obtain liberty of conscience'.[92]

It was also difficult for the common fatherland to be constructed around the defence of the privileges for these contradicted the commonality of the provinces. Moreover, as some clear-sighted individuals perceived, too rigid an adherence to the letter of these privileges inhibited the prosecution of the war against Spain. In 1580 Orange reminded the States General

> how much this state's riches declined after Duke Charles died [in 1477] merely because of trivial debates between the provinces over pretended privileges… whilst the people's true interests were neglected.[93]

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[90] Guicciardini, *Description de tout le Païs-Bas*, 4; *Beschrijvinghe van alle de Nederlanden*, 5. For Charles V's schemes to turn the Low Countries into a kingdom, see A. Bonenfant, 'Les projets d'érection des Pays-Bas en royaume du XV^e^ au XVIII^e^ siècle', *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles* 41 (1935–1936), 151–169, at 158–162. A memorandum, probably drawn up in 1567, advised the king to convert his Low Countries into a kingdom, have himself crowned as 'absolute king' and turn Brussels into a capital like Paris or London, *Papiers d'État*, V, 676.

[91] B. Ebels-Hoving, 'Inleiding', in *Genoechlicke ende lustige historiën. Laatmiddeleeuwse geschiedschrijving in Nederland*, ed. B. Ebels-Hoving (Hilversum, 1987), 9–18, at 13–14.

[92] *Correspondance secrète de Jean Sarrazin, grand-prieur de Saint-Vaast avec la cour de Namur*, ed. C. Hirschauer (Arras, 1912), 17.

[93] *Texts concerning the Revolt*, 212.

Gerard Prouninck went still further in 1587 when he applied the maxim that princes were created for the sake of their subjects, cited only a few years earlier in the Act of Abjuration, to the privileges themselves. These too, he insisted, existed for the sake of the people and should be abrogated if necessary.[94] Occasionally, history was invoked to bolster the notion of a common fatherland. In 1574, Johan Junius the Younger was called on to refute the claim that the Netherlandish territories had nothing in common apart from their geographical contiguity and a loyalty to the same prince. In his counterblast, Junius valiantly appealed to the past, the constitution and to culture to prove that these lands had functioned to all intents as a single body for the previous seven centuries.[95]

Though Junius' arguments were ingenious, they were too rarefied to excite much passion. *Faute de mieux*, we are left then with a common fatherland that was built around a fear and hatred of Spain. In the wake of the Spanish Fury this was certainly compelling, but it gradually lost its potency for the Walloon nobles and the Catholic prelates of Artois and Hainault, who became increasingly alarmed by the radical Calvinism propagated by Ghent after 1578. Hispanophobia remained, of course, the quintessence of the identity of the United Provinces, where it was regularly inculcated through the memorialisation of the Revolt.

Any hopes for the political survival of a common fatherland for all the Low Countries disappeared with the loss of Antwerp in 1585, which robbed the rebels of the one province which might in other circumstances have become the focal point of an independent union of seventeen Netherlands. The emigrés from Flanders and Brabant, who went north, might still pine for their homelands, but their voice slowly lost its influence in Holland. Almost the only relic of this common fatherland, which had seemed so close to fulfilment in the later 1570s, were the maps of the seventeen Netherlands, which remained a cartographic convention until well into the seventeenth century. In the final analysis, it proved impossible to construct a notion of the common fatherland that could withstand both provincial particularism and the polarisation of the confessions.

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[94] *Texts concerning the Revolt*, 272.

[95] Bor, *Oorsprongk*, I, 536–544, partly translated in *Texts concerning the Revolt*, 120–124.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

NO MAN'S LAND. REINVENTING NETHERLANDISH IDENTITIES, 1585–1621

Judith Pollmann*

It has long been known that the Dutch Revolt, like the first stages of the German Reformation and the French Wars of Religion, was accompanied by a true media war. Pamphlets, prints, songs, sermons, rituals, were all used to drive home the message of the rebels.[1] That message, as Alastair Duke has reminded us in this volume, was developed gradually by Orange and his supporters, and depended heavily on the juxtaposition between the 'common *vaderland*' and the alien forces that were threatening it.[2] In 1581 it reached an elaborate and extreme expression in the Prince of Orange's *Apology*, which contrasted the 'natural friendship' that Orange, as a German, felt for the Netherlands, with the 'natural enmity' that characterised their relationship with the Spanish and their evil King, Philip II.[3]

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* While writing this essay, I have greatly benefited from discussions with the Leiden students who took my course 'Het Nederlandse Niemandsland' in the spring term of 2006, and drs. Vincent van Zuilen, who is writing a thesis on communal identity in Dutch pamphlets, 1585–1609. I am further grateful to Brill for its permission to reuse some material in this paper that appeared earlier in Judith Pollmann, '"Brabanters do fairly resemble Spaniards after all". Memory, propaganda and identity in the Twelve Years' Truce', in *Public opinion and changing identities in the early modern Netherlands. Essays in honour of Alastair Duke*, ed. Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (Leiden, 2007), 211–227.

[1] A. Duke, 'Posters, pamphlets and prints. The ways and means of disseminating dissident opinions on the eve of the Dutch Revolt', *Dutch crossing* 29 (2003), 23–44; Craig E. Harline, *Pamphlets, printing, and political culture in the early Dutch Republic*, Archives internationales d'histoire des idées 116 (Dordrecht/London, 1987).

[2] See also M.E.H.N. Mout, 'Van arm vaderland tot eendrachtige Republiek. De rol van politieke theorieën in de Nederlandse Opstand', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 101 (1986), 345–365; K.W. Swart, 'Wat bewoog Willem van Oranje de strijd tegen de Spaanse overheersing aan te binden?', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 99 (1984), 554–572.

[3] *Apologie, ofte Verantwoordinghe des doerluchtighen ende hooghgeborenen vorsts ende heeren, heeren Wilhelms (…) Prince van Orangien (…) Teghen den ban ofte edict by forme van proscriptie ghepubliceert by den Coningh van Spaegnien (…) Hier is oock bygevoeght den voorsz. ban ofte proscriptie* (Leiden, 1581).

Since 1567, when Orange had, in a letter to his brother, first pondered the desirability of targeting the Duke of Alba in his propaganda, a growing number of pamphlets and songs had elaborated on the vices of the Spanish—their pride, arrogance, cruelty and voracious lust- which were frequently associated with the Jewish and Moorish blood that ran in their veins. Until 1578 Philip himself had been spared the blame in this discourse, which claimed that it was evil advisers or even witchcraft that prevented the king from lending support to his rebellious subjects.[4] But after Orange had been outlawed, the gloves had finally come off. In his Apology, Orange accused Philip of deceit, incest and the murder of his own son Don Carlos, allegations from which Philip's reputation has only very recently begun to recover.[5]

Unsurprisingly, the contours of the Netherlandish *vaderland* itself were initially much vaguer than those of the Spanish enemy. So far, feelings of Netherlandishness had been closely linked to the Habsburg dynasty. As Peter Hoppenbrouwers and others point out in this volume, there was nothing self-explanatory about solidarity and cooperation between the Netherlandish provinces. Many scholars have noted the contrast between the particularist political agenda of the rebels and the notion of a common cause, let alone a common fatherland.[6] It is testimony to the impact of early modern propaganda that the Low Countries, which by 1560 still had only the basic outline of a national consciousness, should forty years later have abounded with evidence that the concept of 'Nederland' was widely used and accepted, and not just in the North but also in the South. As one pro-Habsburg pamphlet asked rhetorically in 1598

> . . . are you not all born native and allied compatriots of the one Nederland, like a common body, and as such for two hundred years or so ruled by a common ruler and overlord, in all friendship, alliance and conversation,

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[4] P.A.M. Geurts, *De Nederlandse opstand in de pamfletten, 1566–1584* (Nijmegen, 1956); Daniel Horst, *De Opstand in zwart-wit. Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand (1566–1584)* (Zutphen, 2003).

[5] K.W. Swart, 'The Black Legend during the Eighty Years war', in *Britain and the Netherlands. Volume V. Some political mythologies*, ed. J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann (The Hague, 1975), 36–57; J. Pollmann, 'Eine natürliche Feindschaft. Ursprung und Funktion der schwarzen Legende über Spanien in den Niederlanden, 1560–1581', in *Feindbilder. Die Darstellung des Gegners in der politischen Publizistik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, ed. F. Bosbach (Cologne, 1992), 73–94.

[6] S. Groenveld, 'Natie en nationaal gevoel in de zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanden', *Nederlands archievenblad* 84 (1980), 372–387. See also the chapters by Gunn and Duke in this volume.

> because of which your lands have come to such prosperity, wealth and power, as anyone has ever seen?[7]

Even so, little is known about the process by which the propagandistic appeal to the love of a common fatherland by the Dutch rebels transformed itself into a concept of Netherlandish nationhood that could be used in both the Republic and the Southern Netherlands. We also do not know very much about how it changed and developed in the course of the war. This gap in our knowledge is partly a reflection of gaps in the historiography of the Revolt. Most studies of the Revolt, and therefore of rebel propaganda, have focussed on the period leading up to 1585.[8] Thanks to scholars who worked in the mid-twentieth century we actually know rather more about the efforts of propagandists in the Southern Netherlands after 1585, but inevitably their work leaves many of our modern questions unanswered.[9]

This essay examines two important features of the way in which notions of Netherlandish identity developed during the period from the fall of Antwerp in 1585 leading up to the end of the Twelve Years' Truce in 1621. First, I want to ask why the early seventeenth century witnessed a surge of pamphleteering interest in the concept of Netherlandishness, not only in the Republic but also among the loyalist propagandists of the Habsburg Netherlands. Secondly, I will want to argue that whereas notions of Netherlandishness had initially served primarily to try and *unite* the inhabitants of the Low Countries,

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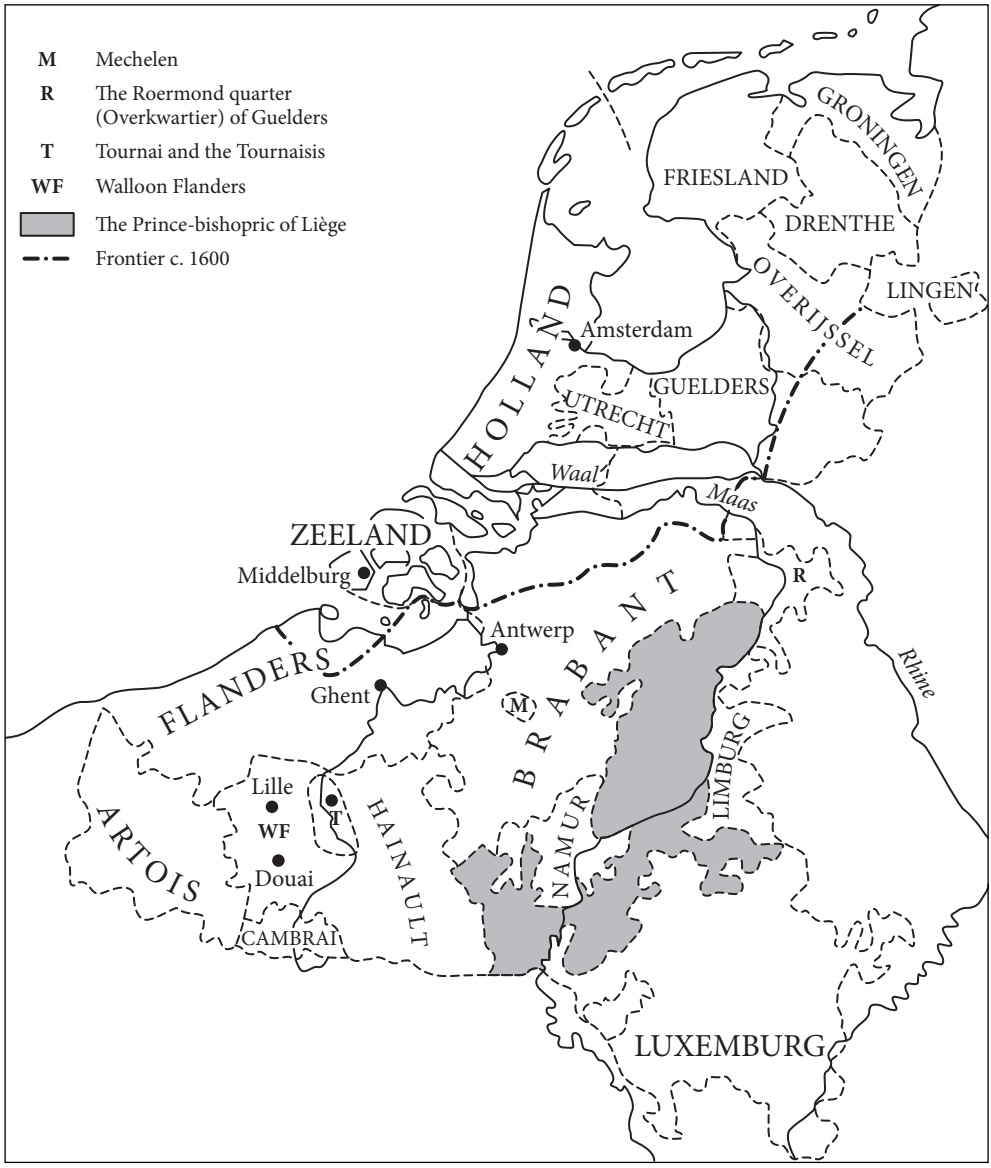
[7] *Beclach ende doleancie vanden Pays, yegens die XVII Provincien van het Nederlandt* (Brussels, 1600) cited in V. van Zuilen, 'The politics of dividing the nation. News pamphlets as a vehicle of ideology and national consciousness in the Habsburg Netherlands (1585–1609)', in *News and politics in early modern Europe (1500–1800)*, ed. J.W. Koopmans, Groningen studies in cultural change 13 (Leuven, 2005), 61–78, at 61.

[8] Geurts, *De Nederlandse opstand in de pamfletten*; A.C.J. de Vrankrijker, *De motiveering van onzen opstand. De theorieën van het verzet der Nederlandsche opstandelingen tegen Spanje in de jaren 1565–1581* (Nijmegen/Utrecht, 1933); G. Janssens, *'Brabant in het verweer'. Loyale oppositie tegen Spanje's bewind in de Nederlanden van Alva tot Farnese 1567–1578*, Standen en landen 89 (Kortrijk-Heule, 1989); Martin van Gelderen, *The political thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555–1590* (Cambridge, 1992). For rare discussions of northern pamphleteering after 1585 see also Ronnie Kaper, *Pamfletten over oorlog of vrede. Reakties van tijdgenoten op de vredesonderhandelingen van 1607–1609*, Werkschrift historisch seminarium 15 (Amsterdam, 1980) and Van Zuilen, 'The politics of dividing the nation'.

[9] J. Andriessen, *De Jezuïeten en het samenhorigheidsbesef der Nederlanden, 1585–1648* (Antwerp, 1957); M. Sabbe, *Brabant in 't verweer. Bijdrage tot de studie der Zuid-Nederlandse strijdliteratuur in de eerste helft der 17e eeuw* (Antwerp, 1933); B.A. Vermaseren, *De katholieke Nederlandse geschiedschrijving in de 16e en 17e eeuw over de Opstand* (Leeuwarden, 1981[2]).



Map 2: The Netherlands divided, c. 1600. After Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic. Its rise, greatness, and fall 1477–1806* (Oxford, 1998), 36.

they now became contested and were used to 'other' groups *within* the Netherlandish population.

I

On 9 April 1609, representatives of the Dutch Republic, the archdukes and the Spanish government signed the treaty that became known as the Twelve Years' Truce. The negotiations had taken two years and the result was less than the peace treaty the parties had hoped for when they began talks. But the Truce offered a breathing space after long years of warfare, and both in the Southern Netherlands and the Republic, the authorities called for public festivities.[10] Everywhere commemorative plays, pamphlets and coins appeared. In Antwerp, for instance, the rejoicing was general and inclusive. One of the scenes in the celebratory procession, that was held to commemorate the Truce, was that of the figure Belgica, a white clad female sporting an antique helmet and a golden sceptre, who was seated on a throne with a lion lying at her feet. The accompanying Latin inscription rejoiced that Belgica, long divided in itself, was now made whole again. There were high hopes for the economic benefits of Truce, especially in the Southern Netherlands. The coin that the city of Brussels had made showed carts crossing each other on their way towards two opposing cities.[11] If the Antwerp mood was especially buoyant, the city on the Scheldt also had a lot to gain. For the first time in years, the gates could be left open. Antwerpers went en masse to visit country places like Berchem and Borgherhout, which had long been unsafe. Prices for foodstuffs and shipping dropped immediately and trade picked up. A pamphleteer claimed that 'when those of Antwerp saw the Hollanders come into their city they could not help weeping from happiness, the women folding their hands, thanking God that they were seeing the day that Holland and Zeeland ships were arriving so freely'. He thought that

[10] Martina Dlugaiczyk, *Der Waffenstillstand (1609–1621) als Medienereignis. Politische Bildpropaganda in den Niederlanden* (Münster, 2005), 180–256; Margit Thøfner, *A common art. Urban ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle, 2007), 227–244.

[11] Van Zuilen, 'The politics of dividing the nation', 78.

everyone wanted to visit: 'in Holland, in Dordt, Rotterdam, Maassluis, Sluis, all one heard was go, go to Antwerp'.[12]

Since 1585, when Antwerp, last bulwark of the Revolt in the South, had fallen to the Spanish, traffic between the two areas had never been impossible, but it required a passport and sometimes complex and expensive journeys. Now things were much easier, not least for the 100,000 or so Flemish and Brabantine exiles who in the 1580s had abandoned their homesteads to move to the Republic and other places where they could practice their Reformed faith. Thus, the Calvinist Leiden widow Hester de la Faille could at last go and visit her brother Martin in her native town of Antwerp, where she had not been since the city's fall almost twenty-five years earlier.[13] In the treaty it had been agreed that confiscations were to be lifted and that any outstanding convictions would not be executed during the Truce. It was now also possible to deal with unfinished business; the sons of William of Orange were only the most prominent of those who could at last settle financial issues dating back to the 1580s.[14] The spinster Marrichje Thomas in Utrecht, for instance, was reminded by a clerical cousin that this was the time to fulfill her mother's dying wish, and to found an altar in the South.[15] For others, the opening of the border simply allowed them to satisfy their curiosity. The Reformed antiquarian Arnoldus Buchelius had no relatives in the Spanish Netherlands, but as soon as the Truce was signed he took his wife, his teenage son and stepson to see the sights of Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent. There, he spent much of his time in Catholic churches, not only to admire Rubens' pictures but also to copy epitaphs and heraldic signs of families that had links with his native Utrecht. At elite level, at least, veritably Netherlandish connections had been forged during the Habsburg regime, as well as during the Revolt, and this was not lost on this Utrecht chauvinist.[16]

Yet such visits were of course also a confrontation with the different paths that the Northern and Southern Netherlands had taken since

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[12] *Blijde tijdinghe van het ghemaecte bestand* (Antwerp, 1609).

[13] A.J. Versprille, 'Hester della Faille', *Leids jaarboekje* 67 (1975), 77–97; Yves Schmitz, *Les della Faille*, 5 vols. (Brussels, 1965–1974), 263.

[14] P. Scherft, *Het sterfhuis van Willem van Oranje* (Leiden, 1966), 256–278.

[15] Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht, ms. 1053 (Arnoldus Buchelius, Ecclesiastica Ultraiectina, 1626–1638), f. 58r, 69r–v. See also Judith Pollmann, 'Women and religion in the Dutch Golden Age', *Dutch crossing* 24 (2000), 162–182, at 176–177.

[16] Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht, ms. 1648 (Arnoldus Buchelius, Inscriptiones Monumentaque in templis et monasteriis Belgicis inventa, c. 1625), f. 279–334. Full text available on: http://digbijzcoll.library.uu.nl/Buchelius.htm.

1585. It would be nice to know whether Calvinist Hester de la Faille was taken to meet those of her relatives who had by now taken holy orders in the Catholic church. And while Calvinist Buchelius and his wife were old enough to be able to remember what Catholic churches looked like, to their sons it must have seemed as if they had entered an alien world. Even to their father, a visit to early baroque Antwerp may have come as something of a shock. He had met some Jesuits when he, himself still a Catholic, had visited the University of Douai in the mid-1580s but the Jesuit domination of the religious scene in Antwerp could have come as a surprise.[17] The Jesuits, on their part, laid on special sermons to harness local Catholics against the presence of heretical visitors, as well as to confront the Northerners with the shortcomings of their beliefs. A number of Reformed ministers from the North who had gone to listen to such sermons reported indignantly on their scandalous content, as well as on the rhetorical flourishes with which the Jesuits, especially, denounced heresy. Their visits led not only to a few public disputations but also the exchange of vicious pamphlets between clerics from North and South. In the meantime, ministers in border areas also made sure to warn their flocks of the dangers of the Roman faith.[18]

Because the Truce was, of course, not just a feast of mutual recognition. In the North, even the festivities of 1609 reflected continuing mistrust. Although the Gorinchem rhetorician Hendrik van der Muyr welcomed the Truce with a poem about the Triumph of Peace, his interlocutors *Pax* and 'Good Government' needed to expend much effort to persuade 'Suspicious Feeling' to accept that Mars could be allowed to leave the country. Significantly, Van der Muyr's character 'Nederland', represented only the seven provinces; he added a warning to his work saying that attempts at deceit would not go unpunished, and that Netherlanders would fight like lions for the fatherland.[19]

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[17] Judith Pollmann, *Religious choice in the Dutch Republic. The reformation of Arnoldus Buchelius (1565–1641)*, Studies in early modern European history (Manchester, 1999), 43–45.

[18] Andriessen, *De Jezuïeten*, 181–190; Philippus Nisius, *De wapenen des geestelijcken leeken ofte boeren crijchs* (Rotterdam, 1609). Nisius was minister in Claeswael, close to the frontier.

[19] Hendrik van der Muyr, *Vreeds-triumph-gedicht, gecomponeert en rethorijckelijcken vertoont by de Camer, Vernieut wt liefden tot Gorinchem, op den generalen vreeds-triumph dach, ghecelebreert den 5. Mey des jaers 1609: handelende van tghemeen wantrouwich ghevoelen, contrarie opinien ende andere vruchten, spruytende wtet twaelff jarich bestant ouer de ghemeene Nederlanden* (Gorinchem, 1609).

Amsterdam's chamber of rhetoric *In Liefde Bloeyende* was also understated in its rejoicing. It pointedly dedicated its play about the Truce to the tale of Brutus' resistance to the tyrant Tarquinius. Its author, P.C. Hooft, ended it with a call to the Netherlands:

> United Lands, love Freedom in this way,
> And hold it truer than the self-interest of each.
> So won't a tyrant with cunning, treason or violence
> Be able to pick apart the weave of your state.[20]

The mistrust seems to contrast with the frequent expressions of commitment to Netherlandish unity that had resounded around 1600. In the South the accession of Albert and Isabella as archdukes for the Netherlands in 1598 had been hailed as a new departure, a first step towards reconciliation with the North. Although their regime is remembered above all for its Catholicism, Albert and Isabella also consciously projected themselves as Netherlandish princes and as an alternative to the 'Spanish' regime of Isabella's father.[21] What could be better than to reunite all seventeen provinces under their natural prince? The entries of the archdukes that were staged by the Southern cities expressed similar hopes. On Antwerp's Melkmarkt a figure of Hercules gave free rein to the seventeen provinces that he held by a leash, because the provinces would now obey him voluntarily: 'of our own accord we follow a peaceful leader and with open ears we heed his benign instructions'.[22]

The Northerners also stressed the natural bonds between the seventeen provinces—even if the undertone was often rather exasperated. In 1599 they tried to encourage the Southerners, who were preparing for a meeting of their States General, to demand the departure of all Spanish troops and peace negotiations with the North. Although the

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[20] C.J. Visscher, *Dese vertooninghen zyn t'Amsterdam (van d'oude Camer In liefd bloeyende) vertoont, op de vieringhe vant Bestand, den 5 Mey 1609,* Atlas van Stolk, 1239; on Hooft's contribution see Simon Groenveld, 'Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft en de geschiedenis van zijn eigen tijd', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 93 (1978), 43–68.

[21] As had also been done by their Habsburg predecessor Ernest in *Een schoon Dialogus tusschen Belgica ende Hope van Peys, tracterende ter eeren van den Hooggheb. Doorl. Vorst. Ernest* (Antwerp, 1594).

[22] I. Bochius, *Historica narratio profectionis et inaugurationis serenissimorum Belgii principum Albert en Isabellae (…) accurate descriptio* (Antwerp, 1602), cited in L. van-den Broeck, 'Het beeld van de vorst bij de blijde inkomst van Albrecht en Isabella in Antwerpen', *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis* 71 (1988), 123–139, at 127. On this entry see also Thøfner, *A common art*, 206–222.

Southerners responded that their only wish was that the lands would be reunited, and indicated that they wanted to send negotiators, the Northern response was rather mixed.[23] The States General pointedly wrote of their hope that

> our endeavours, undertaken for so many years and blessed by God Almighty and by the prayers and help of all pious Netherlanders, at this occasion will be seconded [by you] so that the Netherlands, once liberated from the tyranny of the Spaniards, may be brought first to liberty and then to their old prosperity.[24]

While they thus joined their fate to that of the Southerners, they were distinctly displeased about the obedience that the Southern States were showing to the archdukes. Instead they wanted them to raise a clear and open demand that the Spanish troops would depart. This was good thinking, since the departure of the soldiers was actually also high on the wish list of the Southerners themselves.[25] Continued mutinies among the government troops, as well as the exactions of the Northern soldiers, had left the countryside devastated.Yet even if the Northerners were right about the war weariness in the South, they were also overestimating the support for the rebel cause there. When Stadholder Maurits campaigned in Flanders in 1600 it apparently came as a surprise to him that Flemish peasants attacked the Republic's soldiers wherever they could. An anonymous print that appealed to the inhabitants of Den Bosch to abandon the *gespaenjoliseerden* (Hispanicised) lion in favour of the lion of the Union fell on deaf ears.[26] Yet even after the battle of Nieuwpoort, the Dutch did not give up hope. In 1602, a Nijmegen pamphlet offered promising reports that Flanders and Brabant were desperate for peace.[27] Again, the States General wrote to

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[23] Letter from the States General in Brussels to the States General of the United Provinces, 5 June 1600 in *Actes des États Généraux de 1600*, ed. L.P.Gachard (Brussels, 1849), 757–759.

[24] Letter from the States General of the United Provinces to the States General in Brussels, 17 June 1600 in *Actes*, 763–765, at 763–764.

[25] Van den Broeck, 'Het beeld van de vorst'.

[26] Bram Kempers, 'Assemblage van de Nederlandse leeuw. Politieke symboliek in heraldiek en verhalende prenten uit de zestiende eeuw', in *Openbaring en bedrog. De afbeelding als historische bron in de Lage Landen*, ed. Bram Kempers (Amsterdam, 1995), 60–100, at 91.

[27] *Een seker beclach dat dese navolghende steden doen tegen malcanderen over den cleynen voorspoet ende der steede groten koste diese dagelicx gevoelen (…), overgesonder door een beminder van het vaderlants* (Nijmegen, 1602). See also *Boeren-litanie ofte Klachte der Kempensche landt-lieden, over de ellenden van deze lanck-duerighe Nederlandtsche oorlooghe* ([Amsterdam], 1608).

their peers in the South, this time in pamphlet format, to remind them that the Spanish intended to 'ruin all inhabitants of the Netherlands, of all orders and qualities'. So as to protect their countrymen in the South, the Northerners had continued the 'praiseworthy resolve originally agreed upon by the foremost persons and members of the united Netherlands'. They reminded the States in the South that the common ancestors had always defended ancient liberties and the 'freedoms and rights of the Netherlands'. Reassuring them that in matters of government and religion they would be allowed to rule as they saw fit, the Southern States were encouraged to let bygones be bygones and head for cooperation with the North to 'bring the Netherlands back to its previous flourishing'.[28]

By 1600, then, authors on both sides were using a common vocabulary of unity and Netherlandishness. As we have seen in Alastair Duke's chapter, this language of Netherlandish or Belgian unity had been developed especially in the late 1570s, when the provinces had briefly made common cause in the Revolt. Yet it had not remained rebel property alone. Opponents of the rebellion, too, frequently referred to 'Belgian' miseries and the fate of *Nederlant* and these concepts continued to be redeployed usefully at either side.[29] For both sides it was more attractive to use the language of national unity than that of religion. While there were many people about who experienced the conflict as a war of religion, religious arguments were best saved for internal consumption. Most propagandists realised, just as Orange had done, that religious arguments were unlikely to persuade anyone outside one's own camp. To appeal to the common and 'natural' unity between the provinces could potentially appeal to those of *all* religious persuasions. In both camps, images of the *Leo Belgicus* were frequently used to symbolise this unity. In 1621, a Southern pamphlet was dedicated to the 'Netherlandish tears' that were being shed over the death of Albert—even in Holland. And in both camps, there were frequent reminders of the potential for wealth that the Netherlands, once united, could regain. As the Jesuit Scribani put it in 1610, Belgian great-

[28] *Aen de hooch ende wel-gheboren eenweerdige (…) vrunden ende na gebueren (…) representerende de staten der Nederlanden onder de Spaensche ofte eersthertogen regieringe* (s.l., 1602).

[29] E.g. the poem in the preface of *L'Anatomie du corps politique comparé au corps humain*…(Douai, 1581).

ness was well within reach, if only 'Belgians stopped shedding Belgian blood'.[30]

II

Yet parallel to this language of unity there also ran the need to define the enemy. Southern propagandists tended to blame the Revolt on the ambition and deceit of the prince of Orange, the aggression of the Beggar armies, and the heretical appeal to the 'self-love' of the 'Hollanders'. This was the strategy adopted by the author of one of the most notorious pamphlets of the decade, the *Snuffer of the Holland Torch to extinguish the incendiary letter and missive which was shot from The Hague during the last Full Moon* (1602). In response to the letters from the Northern States, its Jesuit author challenged the intentions of the 'Hollanders', dismissing their regents as 'riff raff' who had displaced the aristocracy and who were hiding their rebellious and heretical designs under the language of common interest and anti-Spanish rhetoric.[31] As J. Andriessen has pointed out, the way in which 'Hollanders' were targeted allowed these propagandists to maintain the fiction that the rest of the Northerners were 'wandering sheep' who, if left to their own devices, would soon see sense, and choose to follow their natural princes.[32] Such authors thus invoked two different concepts of nationhood—in which 'Hollanders' were rebels, and 'Netherlanders' loyal—which did not match the political boundaries between North and South, or indeed between Holland and the rest of the Netherlands.

For its part, the propaganda emanating from the Republic centered almost entirely around allegations about the duplicity of the enemy. A good example of this is the title page of the *Copy of a certain refrain addressed by the overlorded Netherlandish provinces to Holland* [Plate 2].[33] The print juxtaposed the 'overlorded' provinces, whose

[30] Carolo Scribani, *Origines Antverpiensium* (Antwerp, 1610), 29–30.

[31] [Johannes David], *Domp-hooren der Hollanscher fackel, tot blusschinghe des brandt-briefs ende missiue die onlancks met de volle mane vut s'Grauen haghe gheschoten vvierden* (s.l., 1602).

[32] J. Andriessen, 'Nederlands gemeenschapsbesef bij enkele geestelijke auteurs van einde XVIe en begin XVIIe eeuw', *Revue belge de phililogie et d'histoire* 26 (1948), 1001–1019.

[33] *Copie van seker refereyn by de overheerde Nederlantsche Provintien aen Hollant gheschreven, beroerende den vrede* (Amsterdam, 1598).

Copie van seker Refereyn by de overheerde Nederlantsche Provintien aen Hollant gheschreven / beroerende den Vrede. Met oock der Hollanders antwoordt rijms-wijse daer by ghevoecht.
Anno 1594
Anno 1598
Maurinus
Iehova
De over-heerde Provintien
Hollander
Psal. 28. Vers. 3.
Treck my niet henen onder den Godlooſen, ende onder den quaet-doenders, die vriendelijck ſpreken met haren naeſten, ende hebben het booſe in't hertte,
LETTERK.

Plate 2: Title page of *Copie van seker refereyn by de overheerde Nederlantsche Provintien aen Hollant gheschreven, beroerende den vrede* (Amsterdam, 1598), Leiden, University library, MNL 1207 A 18.

spokesman was a duplicitous priest, and a 'Hollander'. Various incidents meant to remind the viewer of the nature of the Habsburg regime. Two attempts to assassinate Prince Maurits were referred to at the top of the picture. The Armada of 1588 and the execution of the Anabaptist woman Anneke Uitenhove in 1597 were offered in evidence for the aggressive nature of the Southern regime. The two *tondos* set into the image offer us contrasting images of the Netherlandish lion. On the left, the lion rampant stands up to a king who claims to be 'doing as he is told' by the pope. On the right, a lion which is tied to the image of 'inquisition' is being liberated by a mouse who is chewing away at his bonds. There were, this image suggested, really two Netherlands, one free and one chained, again not necessarily coinciding with the geographical territories that were occupied by the opposing camps.

As peace negotiations picked up speed, Northern writers expanded the historical dimensions of their arguments. While in the 1580s and 1590s anti-Hispanism had receded in importance, from around 1600 there was sudden surge of interest in the early phases of the Revolt. Pamphleteers frequently alleged that Netherlanders were beginning to forget about the past, and brought all sorts of rhetorical devices to bear to try and remind them of the evils of Spanish rule. One pamphlet in 1608 had an 'old patriot' prophesy about what would come of a peace with the Spanish, while another introduced an 'old skipper' who testified on the years of struggle between the Spanish 'señor' and the Netherlandish 'sailors', who had at last outwitted him but now needed to remain vigilant.[34] A pamphlet with the mysterious title *Argument of a prophetic tragico-comedy presented last year in Syria* (1608) opened with Justus Lipsius returning from Hell, which he had found overcrowded with Spaniards, while the readers of the *Truthful and short tale of the great ambition and the cruel tyranny of the King of Spain, Philip II*…(1608) were reminded of the evils of Philip II—never mind that the king had now been dead for a decade.[35] Relying on evidence of past cruelty, in the Netherlands and in the Indies, the

[34] *Dees wonder-maer end' prophesije is door 's geest gesicht gebooren is eens patriot-out end' bedaecht* (s.l., 1608); *Ghetrouwen raet ende goede waerschouwinghe eens ouden ervaren schippers aen alle vroome matroosen ende trouwe liefhebbers der vereenichde Provincien* (s.l., 1608).

[35] *Argvment van een tragische-comedie prophetique, gherepresenteert tvoorleden iaer in Syria, voor la Bacsa de Tripoly* (s.l., 1608); *Waerachtigh ende cort verhael vande groote ambitie ende wreede tyrannije des conings van Hispaengien Philips den tweede van dier namen* (s.l., 1608).

pamphleteers all argued the same thing—the Spanish could not be trusted. Never remarkable for its recognition of grey areas, Netherlandish anti-Hispanism was now developing its most graphic, at times even ludicrous, expressions.[36]

The theme did not disappear once the Truce had come into force. A print from the Truce years shows how a 'free Netherlander', informed by 'memory' turns away from 'deceit'. [plate 3].[37] Playwright Jan Kolm claimed that his *Nederlants Treur-Spel* of 1616, the first play about the Revolt, would offer food for thought to *Bataefssche lant-lievers*, in these 'dangerous, wild and quarrelsome days' and warned them of the 'amnesia' of the House of Burgundy, that was prone to breaking its oaths.[38] In the same year, Johannes Gysius hoped that his history of the struggle would teach the people in the 'Free Netherlands'

> what is to be expected of the Spanish and the Spanish regime, so that we learn from this that, once being rid of this evil (however pretty and sweet the tunes they may be whistling to tempt us), we should not allow ourselves to be brought back into our former slavery, and pay the penalty for our foolishness.[39]

Pamphleteers and printmakers in the Republic routinely came to contrast life in *Belgica libera* with that in *Belgica subdita*.[40] Yet as the images of Spanish tyranny got ever starker, it of course also became harder to explain the behaviour of the indigenous inhabitants of the Southern, 'overlorded' Netherlands. Increased traffic since the Truce meant that Northerners became ever more aware that the Southerners no longer seemed to be pining for liberation. How could these people, suffering under the terrible yoke of a Spanish regime, behave as if all

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[36] Simon Schama, *The embarrassment of riches. An interpretation of Dutch culture in the Golden Age* (London, 1987), 69–93; Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence abroad. The Dutch imagination and the New World, 1570–1670* (Cambridge, 2001), 164–184; Judith Pollmann, *Het oorlogsverleden van de Gouden Eeuw*, inaugural lecture (Leiden, 2008).

[37] *Bedroch* (s.l., s.d.), Atlas van Stolk, 1223.

[38] I.S. Kolm, *Nederlants treur-spel inhoudende den oorspronck der Nederlandsche beroerten, 't scheyden der ed'len, 't sterven der graven van Egmont, Hoorn ende der Batenborgers* (Amsterdam, 1616), introduction.

[39] [Johannes Gysius], *Oorsprong en voortgang der Neder-landtscher beroerten ende ellendicheden. Waerin vertoont worden, de voornaemste tyrannijen, moorderijen, ende andere onmenschelijcke wreetheden, die onder het ghebiedt van Philips II (…) door zijne stad-houders in 't werck ghestelt zijn, gheduyrende dese Nederlantsche troublen ende oorlogen* ([Leiden], 1616), introduction.

[40] Dlugaiczyk, *Der Waffenstilstand als Medienereignis*, 81–83.

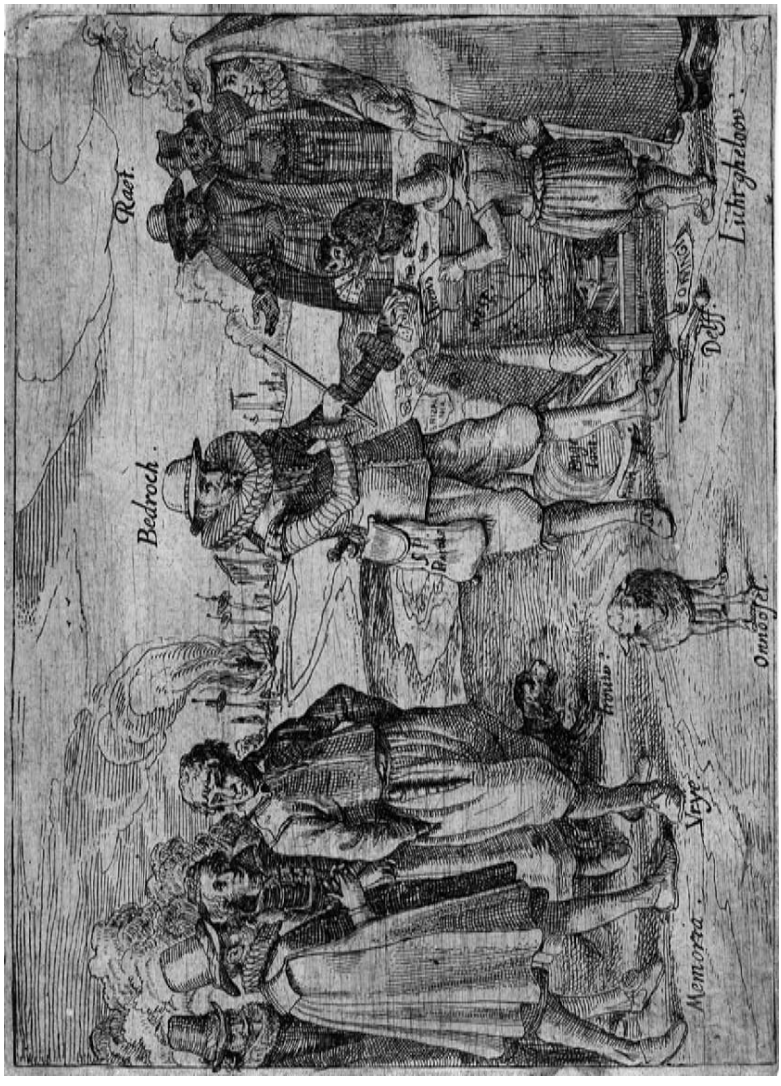

Plate 3: *Bedroch* [Deceit] (early 17th century), Atlas van Stolk, Rotterdam, cat no 1223.

was well? How could one explain that Southerners apparently accepted the Spanish mantle, and proved unwilling to see themselves as victims of tyranny? Many writers in the Republic assumed that people in the South were simply 'asleep'.[41] In his dialogue *Morgenwecker* (Wake up call) of 1610, the Flemish exile Willem Baudartius had a 'free' Netherlander 'awaken' a *gespanioliseerden Nederlander*—or Hispanicised Netherlander—with a potted history of the past forty years of tyranny and broken promises.[42] In 1602 an anonymous poet admonished the cities of Antwerp and Brussels

> Antwerp rich and powerful, Brussels *gentil* and pleasant
> Do you want to remain in slavery for ever
> To a people barbaric, ugly, deformed and tanned,
> Who throughout the world commit their tyranny?
> Wake up, 't is now the time, wake up, offer resistance
> Take courage, like men, take courage, and don't behave like women
> Follow the noble Batavians, don't let yourself be dishonoured
> By the domination of such an evil monster[43]

Six years later, a pamphlet discussing the prodigious meaning of a stranded whale, hoped that this 'stinking fish' would at last show the Southerners that their authorities' alleged love of peace was only a smoke-screen.[44] Others, however, were more censorious. In 1601 the Amsterdam physician Jacobus Viverius published *Den spieghel der Spaensche tyrannie* (The Mirror of Spanish Tyranny). Viverius, himself born in Flanders, targeted his pamphlet against those in Flanders who considered living under a Spanish regime acceptable. Stanza by

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[41] E.g. the Enkhuizen publisher Jan Arentsz Chaallon in his introductory sonnet to *El paternostro de gli Spagnioli ofte rhijm-gedicht, so in Duytsch als Italiaens vervaetende 't goe-leven van de Spaignaerden ende haar comportementen ter plaetsen dat sij meyster zijn. Mitsgaders Los Dies Mandamentos de los Theatinos, wesende de Thien Gheboden der Jesuiten, originelijck in Spaensch ende paraphrastice in Duytsche ghedicht overgheset door een benminder der Nederlandtsche vrijheijt* (Enkhuizen, 1602). His name suggests that he himself originated from the South.

[42] [Willem Baudartius], *Morgen wecker der vrije Nederlantsche provintien ofte een cort verhael vande bloedighe vervolghinghen ende wreetheden door de de Spaenjaerden ende hare Adherenten*… (Danzig, 1610).

[43] Chaallon, *El paternostro.*

[44] *VVare verthooning Ende afbeeldinghe van eenen dooden ende meest half verrotten vis, door die Zee aen der strande op gheworpen den 20. der Maent September, Anno 1608. was lanck ontrent 20. voeten ende lach tusschen Catwijck ende Schevelingen by den Hage in Hollandt, met die beduydenis daer van, hier ouer verclaert. Aenwijsende den Standt ende conditie des Conincx van Spaignien ende sijn bedroch inden wtganck van desen Vrede-handel gheopenbaert* (Middelburg, 1608).

stanza, he described the atrocities the Spanish had committed first in the New World and subsequently in the Netherlands, before making short shrift of collaborating Southerners. It pained him, he said, to see how in the 'sweet land of Flanders', people were ready to shake hands with the 'cruel Spaniards', and he warned them that those who 'feed the tyrants will have to put up with tyranny'. Viverius also made use of the rebel propaganda motif of the 'Spanish whores', Netherlandish women who took up with the Spanish, and so got infected with the 'Spanish pocks', syphilis.

> Yes, kiss your Spanish swain, and get the Spanish disease
> Drive Christ and his people from the dwellings of your court
> You will see the day (if ever blind folk have eyes)
> That he in whom you are now placing so much faith
> Will betray you. To choose alien swains
> Means to choose a fire that freezes wondrously fast
> …That's what you are doing, Flanders and Brabant, to your shame
> He who kindles the fire, will necessarily burn.[45]

Viverius's message was clear; the Netherlandish brethren and sisters in the South, who chose to shake hands with the Spanish, and who were sleeping with the enemy, were losing their patriot virtues and their birthright.

The stereotype of the 'Hispanicised' Netherlander was already several decades old. The device was not homegrown; when embellishing their own version of the Black Legend, Netherlandish propagandists were following closely in the footsteps of French Huguenots, who had introduced the type of the *franc espagnol*, the Frenchman who had been 'Hispanicised' and so lost his claims to Frenchness.[46] The Netherlandish 'peace lovers' who opposed Antwerp's Calvinist regime in the early 1580s were denounced as 'Spanish' in propaganda pamphlets.[47] Farmer Abel Eppens in Groningen described the citizens of

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[45] Jacobus Viverius, *Den spieghel van de Spaensche tyrannie: waer by ghevoegt is eene vreughdighe vieringhe over het veroveren van de stede Rijnberck: waer in verhaelt wordt den ondergangh vande Spaensche Tyrannie of bloedt-dorst* (Amsterdam, 1601), stanzas 61 and 62, see also 67.

[46] As in *Declaration et protestation de ceux de la religion reformée de Rochelle* (La Rochelle, 1568), cited in D.R. Kelley, *The beginning of ideology. Consciousness and society in the French Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981). See also M. Yardeni, *La conscience nationale en France pendant les guerres de religion 1559–1598* (Leuven/Paris, 1971) and Van Gelder, 'Het streven van Prins Willem van Oranje', 170.

[47] As in *Dialogus of 't samensprekinghe tusschen eenen Spaensch-gesinden Peysmakere ende eenen goeden Patriot ofte liefhebber des vaderlants* (Antwerp, 1584).

Catholic Groningen and the 'neutralists' of the surrounding countryside as *spannisierten*.[48] Archduke Albert, said the patriotic historian Johannes Gysius in 1616, might be of Germanic blood, but he was a 'gespagniolisierden Duyts' (Hispanicised German).[49]

What had begun as an attractive strategy to turn opponents of the Revolt into 'traitors' acquired a useful additional function; within the Republic it helped to supersede religious differences, and to obscure the fact that the Revolt in its early decades had been a real civil war. In his sermons the Haarlem minister Samuel Ampzing did not hesitate to point to the dangers of popery, yet in his *Lof van Haarlem*, his eulogy about the city, he chose not to describe quite how divided the Haarlemmers had been in 1572–73 or to shift the blame onto Catholics. He could not avoid references to the opposition to the Revolt, but blamed that just on some *gespanjoliseerde*n.[50] By denouncing Netherlandish opponents of the Revolt as 'aliens', who had transformed themselves into foreigners, the Dutch had thus found a very effective way of stressing that true lovers of the *patria* had always chosen to support the Revolt. The same technique was now used to 'alienate' those Southerners who were willing to abide by the Spanish regime.

It is worth noting that the denunciation of the Hispanicised Netherlanders bore great similarities to the way which Hollanders were targeted by propagandists from the South. In both instances, the demonising of *some* Netherlanders was used to retain the notion that, fundamentally, all *other* Netherlanders formed one community. By 1609 that was already a political fiction—the Spanish had effectively recognised the Republic's existence, and the negotiations made it clear that Northern economic interests prevailed over solidarity with the South. Hugo Grotius was busy developing the Batavian myth that was to be used as a more exclusively Northern alternative for the cumbersome common past under the Habsburgs.[51] As we have seen, some

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[48] W. Bergsma, *De wereld volgens Abel Eppens. Een Ommelander boer uit de zestiende eeuw* (Groningen, 1988), 114, 122.

[49] [Gysius], *Oorsprong*, 406.

[50] H. van Nierop, 'How to honour one's city. Samuel Ampzing's vision of the history of Haarlem', *Theoretische geschiedenis* 20 (1993), 268–282, at 279.

[51] Hugo de Groot, *Tractaet vande oudtheyt vande Batavische nu Hollandsche republique* (The Hague, 1610; facs.edn. Weesp, 1988). See also I. Schöffer, 'The Batavian myth during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in *Some political mythologies*, 78–101.

contemporaries were already thinking of the Netherlands as a country that consisted of seven provinces, rather than seventeen.

Still, Netherlandish reunification continued its hold on the imagination of at least some in Netherlandish society. Although more systematic research is still required, it seems quite clear that it was two groups, especially, who showed themselves most committed to the notion of Netherlandish unity. In the South, it was the Jesuits who proved extremely attached to the idea of one 'Nederland', that would one day be reunited. It is hard to know whether this is simply because they were also the most active propagandists for the archducal regime, or because of reasons that were specific to the order itself. It was, for instance, definitely in its interest to point to the Republic as an area within their remit. What may also have played a role, though, is that there were many Northerners and other former exiles active in the order—who themselves had a stake in reunification. More work is needed to establish this more clearly.[52]

In the North it seems it was the Reformed exiles from Flanders and Brabant who showed themselves most vociferously opposed to peace deals with the Spanish.[53] It was they who most condemned the 'Hispanicised' Southerners, who repeated time and again how dangerous the Spanish regime really was and who refused to allow for the possibility that it had changed since the days of Alba. Perhaps this was because they had most to gain from a continuation of the war—the possibility of a permanent return to their native communities. But it is also possible that another factor was at work here. Whereas others in the Republic could all play around with multiple identities—say, as Haarlemmers first, Hollanders second, and perhaps Netherlanders third, the Southern exiles were foreigners whose right to be in the Republic depended heavily on their identity as refugees, by virtue of their faith and because they were victims of the Spanish. In other words, who they *were* was defined by a Revolt of all the Netherlands, as much as by their Reformed identity. It is perhaps no wonder that it was for them that the parting of the ways between North and South was most painful, and most intolerable. Yet they were also keenest

[52] Andriessen, *De Jezuïeten*; J. Andriessen, 'Van verbondenheid tot vervreemding. Het teloorgaan van het gemeenschapsbesef in de Nederlanden (1585–1648)', *Kultuurleven* 13 (1946), 117–132.

[53] E.g. Kaper, *Pamfletten*; Pollmann, "Brabanters do fairly resemble Spaniards after all".

to lend it a moral dimension. Jacob Duym, in a 1606 play on the fall of Antwerp in 1585, emphasised that it was the city's sins that had brought its fall about: 'Hear, hear, Antwerp, the austere Lord of Hosts is now revealing the causes of your fall'. Its one and only cause was 'the great number of your sins, which are offending the eyes of God'. For 'God's people', He had created a solution: 'in other lands He will lead them, and prepare them a homestead. You, who remain in the city, should take the path of virtue, abandon your arrogance, and better your evil life'.[54]

While the Revolt had originally meant a boost for the development of a joint Netherlandish identity, this could not withstand decades of war, propaganda and confessional conflict. By the early seventeenth century new and separate concepts of Netherlandishness began to develop. And while it was the exiles who were keenest to maintain notions of a shared Netherlandish community, they were also the earliest to articulate the differences between North and South. In 1609 the Reformed exile Adriaen van de Venne had already designed a tapestry that showed Stadholder Maurits and the Spanish commander Spinola pulling apart an image of the *Leo Belgicus*. Five years later he painted his famous picture *de Zielenvisserij* [plate 4] or 'Fishing for souls' of 1614. This is sometimes treated as a rather objective comment on the competition for souls between Catholics and Protestants. (although in the original painting the Catholic fishermen were actually catching nothing). Yet it is also an illustration of a growing sense of division between the worlds of the North, depicted with its political leaders under a green tree on the left, and the desiccated world of the South, with its archdukes and prelates under a dead tree. Van de Venne and his many fellow exiles lived in no man's land between political reality and nostalgia for the past—a great river that now divided the Netherlands for which they claimed to have fought, a river that was at long last to become a divider of cultures.

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[54] Jacob Duym, 'Belegeringhe der Stadt Antwerpen bij den prince van Parma', in Jacob Duym, *Een Ghedenck-boeck, het welck, ons leert aen al het quat en den grooten moetwil van de Spaingnaerden en haren aenhanck ons aenghedaen te ghedencken, ende de groote liefde ende trou vanden princen uyt den huyse van Nassau, aen ons betoont, eeuwelick te onthouden. Speel-wijs in dicht ghestelt* (Leiden, 1606), G I r–v. Similar sentiments in Marijn de Brauwer, *Het otterken, waer in dat sijn vergaert liedekens om te zingen die daer sonderlinghen oock hebben des otters aert* (Haarlem, 1628)

Plate 4: Adriaen Pietersz van de Venne, *De zielenwisserij* [Fishing for souls], 1614, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, SK-A-447.

CHAPTER TWELVE

'LANDS' AND 'FATHERLANDS'. CHANGES IN THE PLURALITY OF ALLEGIANCES IN THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

Robert von Friedeburg

When, in 1627, Luther's *Warnung an Seine Lieben Deutschen* (1531) was reprinted, a new title was added containing a term that did not even exist in Luther's time. The new title read *Allen getreuten Patrioten der Deutschen Redlichkeit*.[1] The term 'patriot', that emerged during the 1570s and that William of Orange appropriated for his own purposes,[2] had by that time spread across Europe, to England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden and Germany.[3] In seventeenth-century Germany, the term even acquired legal significance, as territorial noblemen tried to defend their rights to have a say in princely politics by citing their duties to their territorial fatherland, be it Württemberg, Hesse, Caldenberg or Pomerania.[4] The increasing use of this term throughout Europe did not signal a closer identification of a given person with 'the' nation, leading to some sort of modern—or pre-modern—nationalism. Rather, this use has to be understood in the context of the language of

[1] *Alte Deutsche Treu, Lautere Wahrheit, und wahre Auffrichtigkeit. Allen getreuen PATRIOTEN der Deutschen Redlichkeit (…) Von einem sonderlichen Liebhaber des Friedens und der Wahrheit, Erstlich gedruckt zu Wittenberg* (1627), see Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. O. Brenner *et al.* (Weimar, 1883–), XXX, 271.

[2] See the contribution of Alastair Duke in this volume.

[3] For an overview of occurrences and uses see *'Patria' und 'Patrioten' vor dem Patriotismus. Pflichten, Rechte, Glauben und die Rekonfigurierung europäischer Gemeinwesen im 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Robert von Friedeburg (Wiesbaden, 2005), with case studies including Ireland, England, Spain, France, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands.

[4] Robert von Friedeburg, 'Why did seventeenth-century Estates address the jurisdictions of their princes as fatherlands? War, territorial absolutism and the duties of patriots in seventeenth-century German political discourse', in *Orthodoxies and heterodoxies in German-speaking lands. Religion, politics and culture 1500–1700*, ed. Randolph C. Head and Daniel Christensen (Leiden, 2007), 169–194; Robert von Friedeburg, 'The making of patriots. Love of fatherland and negotiating monarchy in seventeenth-century Germany', *The journal of modern history* 77 (2005), 881–916.

duties and offices that permeated early modern society. To call oneself a patriot implied that it was one's task, indeed one's duty to defend the fatherland, and to claim the right to perform these responsibilities. Love of the 'fatherland' was a passion that entitled patriots to a certain amount of participation in public affairs. In the course of the seventeenth century, it was particularly members of the lower, territorial nobility in Germany, who, while in the process of being downgraded to mere subjects by their princes, referred to their 'fatherland'.[5]

The neologism 'patriot' merits closer investigation because this can help us to reconsider notions like identity. In recent years, the question as to what extent early modern Germany should be called a 'nation' and the early modern Holy Roman Empire its state, or *Reichsstaat*, has led to some debate.[6] Scholars have not only discussed how far nineteenth-century notions such as 'nationalism' might be applied to the German situation.[7] They have also asked whether the early modern Empire with its peculiar constitutional set up should actually be considered a 'special case' in a Europe, not of emerging nation-states,[8] but

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[5] Robert von Friedeburg, 'The office of the patriot. The problems of passions and of love of fatherland in protestant thought. Melanchthon to Althusius, 1520s to 1620s', *Studies in medieval and renaissance history* 3rd series 3 (2006), 241–273.

[6] Georg Schmidt, *Geschichte des alten Reiches. Staat und Nation in der frühen Neuzeit, 1495–1806* (Munich, 1999), and Heinz Schilling, 'Reichs-Staat oder frühneuzeitliche Nation der Deutschen oder teilmodernisiertes Reichssystem. Überlegungen zu Charakter und Aktualität des alten Reiches', *Historische Zeitschrift* 272 (2001), 377–549; Heinz Schilling, 'Das Alte Reich—ein teilmodernisiertes System als Ergebnis der partiellen Anpassung an die frühmoderne Staatsbildung der europäischen Nachbarn und Territorien', in *Imperium Romanum, irregulare corpus, teutscher Reichs-Staat. Das alte Reich im Verständnis der Zeitgenossen und der Historiographie*, ed. Matthias Schnettger (Mainz, 2002), 279–291. The debate on the *medieval* Empire and its relation to the issue of German nationhood is not our purpose here, but see among the major summaries: Joachim Ehlers, *Die Entstehung des deutschen Reiches* (Munich, 1994); Pierre Monnet, 'La patria médiévale vue d'Allemagne, entre construction impériale et identités regionales', *Le Moyen Âge* 107 (2001), 71–90; Bernd Schneidmüller, 'Konsens—Territorialisierung—Eigennutz. Vom Umgang mit spätmittelalterlicher Geschichte', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 39 (2005), 225–246; Bernd Schneidmüller, 'Reich—Volk—Nation. Die Entstehung des deutschen Reiches und der deutschen Nation im Mittelalter', in *Mittelalterliche Nationes—neuzeitliche Nationen*, ed. Almut Büst and Rex Rexheuser (Wiesbaden, 1995), 73–101.

[7] Claudius Sieber-Lehmann, *Spätmittelalterlicher Nationalismus. Die Burgunderkriege am Oberrhein und in der Eidgenossenschaft* (Göttingen, 1995), see review by Norbert Kersken in *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 26 (1999), 271–273.

[8] Heinz Schilling, 'Wider den Mythos vom Sonderweg. Die Bedingungen des deutschen Weges in die Neuzeit', in *Reich, Regionen und Europa in Mittelalter und Neuzeit. Festschrift für Peter Moraw*, ed. Paul-Joachim Heinig *et al.* (Berlin, 2000), 699–714.

of princes[9] and 'dynastic agglomerations'.[10] These debates have helped to shift attention away from the nineteenth-century framework of assumptions on identity—the nation, the nation-state, the autonomous person—and have redirected our interests towards the early modern uses of terms like 'fatherland' and 'patriot'. The claim of various early modern groups to be 'patriots' should be seen against the backdrop of their wish to develop their own role, and appropriate responsibilities, for the common good.[11]

Of course, inhabitants of the early modern Empire made such claims in a specific context, and in order to understand this we need to familiarise ourselves with its 'constitutional' set up and its gradual change during the sixteenth century. In what follows, I will, first, give a very rough sketch of the 'constitutional' make up of the Empire around 1500 and the place of the *Länder* or 'lands' in it—among them then still some of the Burgundian lands later becoming parts of Philip of Spain's inheritance and yet later of the Union of Utrecht.[12] This is indispensable for making sense of its politics, and therefore also of its propaganda mechanisms and the general context in which references to a German nation and a German fatherland occurred. Secondly, I will address the propagandistic use of 'nation' and 'fatherland' as these concepts emerged in pamphlets until the 1540s, and examine how this affected the constitutional set up of the Empire. Thirdly, I would like to explore how a new concept of fatherland, or rather fatherlands in the plural, emerged, that increasingly replaced the old 'lands', and that began to play a political and legal role in its own right by about 1600. Fourthly, and by way of conclusion, I will reconsider what this development may have to do with identity and state-building.

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[9] Lucien Bély, *La société des princes, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1999).

[10] John Morrill, *'Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown'. Dynastic crises in Tudor and Stewart Britain 1504–1746*, The Stenton lecture (Reading, 2005).

[11] Crucial here is Conal Condren, 'Liberty of office and its defence in seventeenth-century political argument', *History of political thought* 18 (1997), 460–482, that has now been backed up by his *Argument and authority in early modern England. The presupposition of oaths and offices* (Cambridge, 2006).

[12] See below note 16.

I

Up to 1495, that is, in the year that agreement was reached between Emperor Maximilian and the imperial Estates on how to maintain and enforce peace, the Empire (that is the *Imperium Romanum*) was not primarily a constitutional unit, but a mixed political system that comprised princely dynasties, regional associations of cities, nobles and the imperial Church. The Empire was variously conceived of in three overlapping, yet different senses.

First, it still claimed the transferral of the *plenitudo potestatis* from the late Roman Empire (*translatio imperii*), not only in the *regnum teutonicum* (recognised in the 1122 Worms concordat), but also in the remains of the Italian kingdom and the former kingdom of Arles (Burgundia Cisjurana); this included the duty to protect Latin Christianity.[13] The correlating imperial Church comprised prelates with jurisdictions and lands extending into Italy and France: one such was Giovanni Ludovico Madruzzo (1532–1600), bishop of Trent, member of the *congregatio germanicae* of the papal administration in Rome, who dealt through the 1560s with the Imperial Aulic court and the Imperial Diet.[14] Another was the archbishop and elector of Trier, who was also the metropolitan archbishop of the suffragan-bishoprics of Metz, Toul and Verdun, as well as chancellor for Gallia and the kingdom of Arles. Secondly, the Empire laid claim to fiefs for instance in upper Italy, Burgundy, Savoy and Lorraine (*Reichslehensverband)*, where the elected king and emperor remained the feudal lord (*Reichslehensherr*).[15] And finally, since the fifteenth century there was a growing sense in the *regnum teutonicum,* the eventual centre of Imperial reform, that it constituted a *patria communis* of Germany or of 'German lands'. A 1422 enumeration of these consisted of 'Swabia, Bavaria, Franconia, at the Rhine, in the Wetterau, Hesse, Thuringia,

[13] On the occurrence of the term as 'Kampfbegriff' during the struggle over Gregorian reforms see Schneidmüller, 'Reich—Volk—Nation', 86–87; see also Ehlers, *Die Entstehung*, 94–95.

[14] Bernhard Steinkauf, *Giovanni Ludovico Madruzzo (1532–1600): katholische Reformation zwischen Kaiser und Papst. Das Konzept zur praktischen Gestaltung der Kirche der Neuzeit im Anschluß an das Konzil von Trient* (Paderborn, 1993).

[15] The decline of the actual power of the emperors outside the *regnum teutonicum* and Bohemia reduced the difference between emperorship and kingship to allow primarily for the possibility of having a king elected while the emperor was still alive.

Saxonia, Westphalia, Meissen' and, indeed, 'Brabant, Holland, Zeeland, Gulik and Guelders'.[16]

During the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the complaints about the enforcement of peace that had been voiced throughout the century, in particular in the context of the Hussite Wars, coincided with the Ottoman advance and wars against Burgundy and the French crown in Italy, that were invigorated by the dynastic claims of Frederick III and Maximilian.[17] These debates were coloured by a rising interest in, and identification with, a German 'nation', not least among humanists in the aftermath of the discovery of Tacitus' *Germania,*[18] which was used to contrast the alleged ancient virtues of Germans with the corruption

[16] Ernst Schubert, 'Der rätselhafte Begriff "Land" im späten Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit', *Concilium medii aevi* 1 (1998), 15–27, at 15–16; for a qualification of Schubert's view that there was no singular German land see Eckhard Müller-Mertens, Imperium und Regnum im Verhältnis zwischen Wormser Konkordat und Goldener Bulle, in: Historische Zeitschrift 284 (2007)561–595, 584–5; for the process of gradual dissolution from the Empire see Robert Feenstra, 'À quelle époque les Provinces-Unies sont-elles devenues independantes en droit à l'égard du Saint-Empire?', *Tijdschrift voor rechtsgeschiedenis* 20 (1952), 30–63, 182–218. The Burgundian possessions inherited by Maximilian—as husband to Mary of Burgundy—were mainly subsumed in the Burgundian imperial circle, divided in two regional parts, such as Brabant, Flanders, Holland (the so-called lower lands) in the north and the Freigrafschaft Burgundy in the south. In 1548, the Burgundian treaty stipulated that the Empire lost jurisdiction, but kept responsibility for defence. The duchy of Guelders (and county of Zutphen), Utrecht, Groningen and Overijssel were added (from the Lower Rhenish circle), the whole area falling under Philipp II of Spain with the abdication of Charles V. Those areas becoming part of the Union of Utrecht were in the armistice with Spain in 1609 acknowledged to be independent and not part of the Empire anymore, but see Horst Rabe, *Reich und Glaubensspaltung. Deutschland 1500–1600* (Munich, 1989), 388–391, for a concise account of the factual decline of adherence to the Empire during the 1550s to late 1570s, making the Union of Utrecht the most important single step in the process of their dissolution from the Empire.

[17] Mainly associated with the conflicts with Charles the Bold of Burgundy from his accession in 1467. In 1469 Duke Siegmund of Austria had rented out his possessions in Alsatia and Breisgau to Charles the Bold, against whose administrator an uprising of the Alsatian towns occurred in 1474, leading to a war between Burgundy, the Swiss and Austria ending in defeat for Charles (died 1477). Maximilian's marriage with Charles's daughter Mary (died 1482) led to further succession conflicts over Burgundy with France (peace treaties of 1482 and 1493 between Maximilian and France). From the 1490s, an intense conflict between Emperor Maximilian and the French kings Charles VIII and Louis XII ensued over the prevented marriage between him and the Duchess Anne of Bretagne in 1492, the war against the Swiss with Louis supporting the Swiss, and Maximilian's army defeated in 1499. The invasion of Italy by the French king Charles VIII in 1494 and his conquest of Naples in 1495, destroying the Italian balance of power, led Maximilian also to defend his Italian claims against France.

[18] First printed 1471. On the impact of humanism see *Nationenbildung. Die Nationalisierung Europas im Diskurs humanistischer Intellektueller. Italien und Deutschland*, ed. Herfried Münkler, Hans Grünberger and Kathrin Mayer (Berlin, 1998).

of other countries, and in particular of the Church of Rome and its fiscal practices. It was the context of the Burgundian Wars, of complaints about Rome and the fiscal demands on princes and cities, that gave rise to rhetorical references to a 'German nation' and a common German 'fatherland', that were, increasingly, identified with the *regnum teutonicum*.

The fifteenth-century *regnum*, however, was itself an ill-defined entity, and any number of factors, not least coincidence and accidents, determined who was going to be invited or present at *Hoftagen* and *Reichstagen* in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For it cannot be stressed too much that the Empire was not, even after the onset of the implementation of Reform, a well defined kingdom like England, or at least a reasonably clear cut assortment of crown lands and fiefs with a relation to the king, like France. The year 1495, when the king of Romans and some cities and princes agreed to institute a common court, regular diets and later also districts, to implement administrative measures, emphasised this fact. The bodies and people that were represented at this diet or which resorted to this court were increasingly the German-speaking lands within the Empire, while other fiefs of the Empire, for instance the Italian ones, did not take part in the reform of 1495. There was thus a growing distinction between the Empire as *Reichslehensverband* and the *regnum teutonicum*. Their elites increasingly moved in different political worlds—although even in the sixteenth century, someone like the Giovanni Ludovico Madruzzo was not so much straddling them, as continuing to treat them as essentially one and the same thing.

The parts of the Empire that participated in the 1495 Reform emerged from it as a body with the emperor at its head and the Imperial estates as its limbs. It was understood to be made up of 'lands', but these were emphatically not equated with the jurisdictions of princes or of cities. Until c. 1500, enumerations of 'German lands' did not list principalities or jurisdictions, but traditional regions, such as Franconia, Swabia or Westphalia.[19] German lands were bound together not only or primarily by a dynasty, but by rules and procedures that were administered by a wide range of legal scholars and could be enforced even against the emperor's wishes. From 1519, their elected king was even formally

[19] Ernst Schubert, 'Land', in Ernst Schubert, *Fürstliche Herrschaft und Territorium im späten Mittelalter* (Munich, 1996), 1–5.

bound to respect the *Wahlkapitulationen*. In 1508 Maximilian proclaimed himself to be 'elected Roman emperor' without papal assent.

After the Reform of 1495, this body within the Empire came to be described as 'of the German nation'. During the election campaign of Charles against Francis of France, supporters of Charles even alleged the emperor needed to be of German tongue, something that was not actually mentioned in the Golden Bull. Forty years ago John Elliott identified the increasing density of law and legal procedures in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as one of the key developments producing a sense of community in Europe, and this very much applies to this part of the Empire.[20] It had neither a single ruling dynasty, nor any one political centre, but it functioned well through some sets of increasingly complicated rules and procedures. These were going to become the flesh and bone of a good deal of the meaning of nation and fatherland.

II

The application of terms like nation or fatherland, of course, remained entirely unaffected by the lack of territorial identities. The appropriation of these terms around 1500 did not primarily address a given defined legal district. Instead the 'nation' was imagined to consist of precisely those families that were also represented at Imperial diets, the citizens of the Empire in an Aristotelian sense. *Patria* and *amor patriae* remained connected to late medieval and Renaissance thinking on duties and virtues that were meant to be indispensable to, and nourished by, civic life. To Ptolemaeus of Lucca, Thomas Aquinas's most important student and author of the later volumes of Thomas's *De Regimine*, a major and frequently read work, *amor patriae* remained closely connected to the issues of just government and citizenship. Among the three essential virtues that could flourish only under a legitimate and just government he counted *amor patriae, zelum iustitiae* and *zelum civilis benevolentiae*—love for the country, zeal for justice and the just implementation of laws, and zeal for the well-being of one's fellow

[20] J.H. Elliott, 'Revolution and continuity in early modern Europe', *Past and present* 42 (1969), 35–56, at 48–49.

citizens and civic issues.[21] *Amor patriae* was meant to be inscribed on the heart, to direct men towards the defence of the religion and laws they had been brought up with; for religion and laws provided the indispensable bond for the human community that had nourished the individual. It was thus part of the irrevocable piety owed to God, parents and, indeed, the fatherland. To these three entities, any individual was meant to owe an immeasurable and irrevocable obligation—to the point of never being fully able to live up to it. Bearing this in mind, it is not so difficult to understand that the rhetoric of nation and fatherland began to spread in public discourse, not least among the legal scholars, clergy and princely administrators who were present during fifteenth-century Church councils. At these councils, in particular at Constance, reform of the Empire and the Church in their broader sense (the first one mentioned above) was a major issue. The reform of the Church remained a prime responsibility of the Empire and its emperor. The events offered humanists a chance to show off their skills and rhetoric.[22] Using the new Latin prose styles to good effect, helped to build many a career. Consider the case of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, a prominent churchman and humanist. His *Pentalogus* (1443), a piece of learned advice for King Frederick of the Romans on the strategy to be used at the Council of Constance, was littered with references to Seneca, Cicero, Vergil, Aristotle and Suetonius. Since the reform of Church and Empire was to be achieved by consensus through debate, emphasis was placed on rhetoric as an important tool to address an assembly and persuade the well-meaning, not least to support a campaign to regain Italy. Emperor Frederick's speech to the assembled Estates, as envisioned by Piccolomini, is littered with references to *honor Germanico, nacio Germanico, nostra nacio*, his government for the sake of the fatherland rather than his own honour,[23] and the

[21] [Ptolomaeus de Lucca], Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum*, ed. F. Schreyvogl and U. Matz (Stuttgart, 1971), lib. 3, ch. 4.

[22] Johannes Helmrath, 'Diffusion des Humanismus und Antikerezeption auf den Konzilien von Konstanz, Basel und Ferrara/Florenz', in *Die Präsenz der Antike im Übergang vom Mittelalter zur frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Ludger Grenzmann *et al.* (Göttingen, 2004), 9–54; Johannes Helmrath, 'Der europäische Humanismus und die Funktionen der Rhetorik', in *Funktionen des Humanismus*, ed. Thomas Maissen and Gerrit Walther (Göttingen, 2006), 20–48.

[23] Enea Silvio Piccolomini, 'Pentalogus', in *Quellen zur Reichsreform im Spätmittelalter*, ed. Lorenz Weinrich, Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters 39 (Darmstadt, 2001), 250–291, at 258: 'non mei honoris causa, sed patrie retinendi'.

ancient virtues of the Germans.[24] Considering specific group interests mattered just as much. The cities were to be reminded of their vested interest in a strong Empire in order to defend their liberties; princes were to be reminded of the protection of their privileges through the electoral character of the monarchy, which opened up the possibility of gaining the title for their own dynasty.[25] The emperor should stress the utility of his enterprise and the conservation of common honour, just as Alexander had done when he appealed to the Macedonians after his father's death.[26] In this way he might deflect the suspicions of the electoral princes against any measure that would eventually increase the power of the emperor, and hide from their view any plans to increase imperial power[27] and strategies that were to secure the election of a successor to Frederick from his own dynasty.[28] In his didactic discussion Piccolomini blended the preservation of religion and the common good by reforming the *institutions* responsible for their upkeep. He showed a keen awareness of the political realities of diverse and scattered power, and the subsequent need to persuade and to appeal to the interests of different groups, underscoring this with classical examples, and with special emphasis on issues that were close to the author's own heart, such as his plan to have Frederick capture Italy.

While such rhetoric was already present in political thought at the time of the Council of Constance, it was the spread of pamphlets as a means of communication, the political upheaval of the Burgundian Wars and the Turkish advance, and then the critique of Rome, that was to popularise this rhetoric enormously. When pamphlets urged that the honour of the German *patria* be defended against Charles the Bold during the later 1470s, they reminded the German nobility and the towns of their duties, in particular of duties not specified in their enfeoffments. That was, of course, precisely what the propaganda of Maximilian needed to do—to persuade a wavering public that money had to be given to him to pursue his Burgundian inheritance, and to defend lands held by the Habsburgs at the South Eastern fringe against the advances of the Ottoman. Within decades the accidental conjunction

[24] *Ibid.*, 257–260.
[25] *Ibid.,* 262: 'civitatum maxime interest'.
[26] *Ibid.*, 264: 'considerate (…) vosque ad tot utilitates et ad conservacionem communis honoris'.
[27] *Ibid.*, 285.
[28] *Ibid.*, 289.

of the emergence of a new information technology and the spectacular rise of humanist terms and arguments with the Burgundian Wars and the Ottoman threat, turned the terms *patria* and 'nation' into buzz words. But they kept their Christian connotation. True, some humanists seemed to isolate the concept of 'fatherland' from this connection to faith and law. To Ulrich von Hutten, 'pietas est amare patriam'.[29] Philip Melanchthon was probably equally influential. In a letter of 1538 to Count Schlick he reiterated that love of country was indeed inscribed on the heart of men by God to instigate them to defend the religion and the laws of that country, but that ultimately such love pointed to the love to 'illam coelestem sedem, unde animorum origo est'. *Patria* had to be understood as the community enforcing true doctrine and just laws.[30] Love, however, to Melanchthon was a passion that was capable of directing the human will.[31] It was ultimately by divine grace that such passions were not doing damage but directed the human mind toward the good and pious.

This rhetoric, first practised and spread in humanist pieces at the meetings of councils, became the stuff of common pamphlets. The election campaign of Charles V in 1519, but even more the incredibly successful campaigns of the Reformation, carried this transformation of learned argument into popular propaganda. Luther himself, conscious of the indeterminate but somehow important role of what was about to become the 'Reformation public', chose to capitalise on its rhetoric and put his own address to the German nobility in 1520 consciously in the terms of reform and nationhood that had been established by this time.

Thus, everyone could and did use the new terms, not only Maximilian and 'his' humanists, but also Luther, and in particular the Lutheran princes. Catholics and Protestants referred to it.[32] But did this also

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[29] Ulrich von Hutten's preface to 'De Donatione Constantini quid veri habeat…', in Ulrich von Hutten, *Schriften*, ed. Eduard Böcking, 5 vols. (Leipzig, 1859–1870), I, 158, quoted after Martin Treu, 'Hutten, Melanchthon und der nationale Humanismus', in *Humanismus und Wittenberger Reformation*, ed. Michael Beyer and Günther Wartenberg (Leipzig, 1996), 353–366, at 366.

[30] Philip Melanchthon, *Omnia opera*, ed. Karl Bretschneider, 28 vols. (Halle, 1834–1860), III, 565–567.

[31] Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen, 'Melanchthons Auffasssung vom Affekt in den Loci Communes von 1521', in *Humanismus und Wittenberger Reformation*, 327–336.

[32] On Catholic examples see David V.N. Bagchi, '"Teutschland über alles Welt". Nationalism and catholicism in early Reformation Germany', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 82 (1991), 39–57.

produce a new identity, or change existing terms of obedience? Allegiance was surely due to God, and the impact of Reformation theology transformed ideas on lawful allegiance. Yet beyond this allegiance to God, ideas of nations and fatherlands took root in an Empire where allegiance was primarily due to princes or hometowns. Both Frederick and Maximilian had attempted to control the country, or at least parts of it, with the help of the Swabian League, but even within that League, they learnt that obedience depended on the League's constitution, and that this could lead to direct disobedience, as Maximilian understood it, to him as king. As late as 1504, when he was at the zenith of his power, Maximilian complained bitterly because members of the Swabian League refused to obey his orders if these contradicted agreements within their league and to which they thought even the king and emperor had to submit the *Pflicht, Brieff und Siege*'.[33] The Cologne medievalist Eberhard Isenmann has uncovered to what extent the formally recognised *summa potestas* of the emperor as *dominus* over the laws was qualified in legal and constitutional practise. Legal *consilia* agreed that the emperor could derogate positive laws and interpret divine and natural law. However, they also argued that in most cases the emperor was acting through his *postestas ordinaria,* which was bound to positive laws and specific procedures. *Consilia* even assumed a natural right of all vassals and subjects to due process of law—'einrede und were, die auss naturlichen Rechten zugegeben'. Jurists regularly combined their acknowledgment of the imperial *plenitudo potestatis* with the defence of the *merum imperium* of princes and free cities by emphasising the imperial *potestas ordinaria* as the relevant framework of legal dispute and by construing, even in contradiction to what the natural person of the emperor had ordered, his fictitious legal will as taking into account due process of law and legitimate right as interpreted by the litigating parties.[34] As a consequence, objections to, and even non-compliance with, imperial orders in order to clarify and amend them, were part and parcel of the legal

[33] Horst Carl, 'Landfriedenseinung und Ungehorsam', in *Widerstandsrecht in der frühen Neuzeit. Erträge und Perspektiven der Forschung im deutsch-britischen Vergleich*, ed. Robert von Friedeburg (Berlin, 2001), 85–112, at 102.

[34] Eberhard Isenmann, 'Der römisch-deutsche König und "imperator modernus" als "monarcha" und "princeps" in Traktaten und in deutschen Konsilien des 15./16. Jahrhunderts', in *'Panta Rei'. Studi dedicati a Manlio Bellomo*, ed. Orazio Condorelli, 5 vols. (Rome, 2004), III, 15–79, at 53: quotation from Dr. Jacobus Mesching, Council of Worms.

process, in particular since emperors were frequently absent or had only few means to enforce their commands. Even within the *regnum teutonicum*, vassals could only be deprived of their fiefs and titles in extraordinary and disputed circumstances. Only in some cases of open rebellion, princes like Ulrich Duke of Württemberg, John Frederick, Elector of Saxony and later Frederick III, Elector Palatine, temporarily or permanently forfeited parts of their lands and their dignity for violating their responsibilities toward their lord.[35]

By the 1540s, the terminology of *patria* and fatherland had mainly been appropriated by Lutheran princes, towns and pamphleteers to explain their resistance against the emperor, not as a rebellion of heretics, but as a lawful campaign to defend the common laws and procedures of the German nation and the common fatherland. They hoped that such an endeavour would also appeal to their Catholic compatriots, or at least sufficiently so for them not to interfere. From the 1540s, Lutheran pamphlets drew attention to the horror of Spanish—not Bavarian or Trier—atrocities, and the need to defend the freedom of the German nation—that is, the privileges of the princes constituting that nation—and of the German fatherland.[36] And indeed, in 1552, when the Protestant princes rebelled again against Charles, Catholic princes did not help the emperor to any significant extent. Meanwhile, the emphasis on proper procedure and the privileges of princes and imperial towns slowly moved to the conceptual heart of the notions of nation and fatherland. The lack of a monarchical power centre and the density of legal institutions encouraged 'waging law' by a continuous process of construing privileges and legal titles. Within the *regnum teutonicum* the religious strife of the 1520s to 1540s was eventually solved at Passau and Augsburg, not least by the Estates of the Empire putting their allegiance to an Empire that safeguarded procedures to protect everyone's lands and privileges, with the emperor as coordinator—not judge. Meanwhile the Habsburgs remained responsible for keeping the Ottoman Empire at bay.

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[35] See on these events and the manner of execution Robert von Friedeburg, *Self-defence and religious strife in early modern Europe. England and Germany, 1530 to 1680* (Aldershot, 2002), 37–55; Rabe, *Reich und Glaubensspaltung*, 264, on the problems of the trial of Johann Friedrich.

[36] Most recently, Georg Schmidt has particularly drawn attention to this in a large number of publications. See mainly: Schmidt, *Geschichte des alten Reiches*.

III

Historians disagree on the real impact of such pamphlet rhetoric. Everyone knew that it was slanted towards the Lutherans, and as Thomas Kaufmann has shown with respect to Magdeburg, magistrates could unleash, but then again also stop, this kind of propaganda-campaign. What, then, about *patria* and identity? Was it no more than pamphlet rhetoric? In the view of many, mainly Catholic, historians, the 1555 peace of Augsburg finished off the Empire because it took away its religious—Catholic—unity and mission. In the nineteenth century, Protestant historians, who were often pro-Prussian, stressed their own *ersatz* religion that was the nation. Although I share the Catholics' insistence on the importance of religion, I do not share their conclusions. It is here that historian Georg Schmidt, Protestant though not pro-Prussian, does have an important point.[37] In 1570, fifteen years after the peace of Augsburg, Lazarus Schwendi, a chief advisor of Emperor Maximilian II summarised in his state of the Empire (*Diskurs and Bedenken über den Zustand*) the political situation that had developed by 1555. He had no doubt that there was one Empire providing a 'fatherland' for its inhabitants. He deplored the factual lack of imperial power, but accepted the possibility of religious cohabitation by co-operation of emperor and princes. That vision depended on a non-confessional understanding of the Christian religion: the term *patria* or fatherland had become an accepted term to describe the *regnum teutonicum* for Catholic and Lutheran estates alike.

By that time, however, the term *patria* was also increasingly being used for an entity that did not figure in descriptions of the Empire around 1500 at all—the jurisdictions of princes. By the second half of the sixteenth century, lawyers in the service of princes had introduced the term *patria* in order to designate an area under single administrative, executive, and judicial control. The claim to possess this kind of control was not, and could not be, the same that Bodin was going to make.[38] But these lawyers invented what seemed to be the next best option within the framework of the Empire. While ultimately remaining answerable to the emperor and the courts of the Empire, a *patria*

[37] Schmidt, *Geschichte des alten Reiches*.

[38] J.H.M. Salmon, 'The legacy of Jean Bodin. Absolutism, populism or constitutionalism?', *History of political thought* 17 (1996), 500–521.

was deemed to be a recognisable unit of its own, owing to the specific concatenation of powers over it by a single inferior magistrate.

Legal dictionaries and handbooks for students referred to the provinces of the later Roman Empire and their heads, the *presides provinciarum*, to provide an example for this new meaning of *patria*. For example, Johannes Spiegel's *Lexicon iuris civilis* of the 1540s, 'one of the major pedagogical handbooks' of the century, cited among the listed meanings of *patria*, the *patria potestas*, i.e. the legal power of the father over his family. But it also listed *patria* as *provincia*, a spatially defined area in which all powers and administrative agencies necessary to the upkeep of political order were held by a single magistrate.[39] In 1577, a later edition of this dictionary added not only a further reference on the duty of *caritas* to the *patria* but also a reference to Johannes Oldendorp's *In verba legum XII tabularem scholia*. This work was actually appended to this later edition, so that readers could immediately check the reference. Oldendorp's commentary discussed the office and legal rights of various magistrates in Roman law, and especially that of the heads of the provinces. These references were included in a later edition of the same dictionary, the *Lexicon iuridicum*, of 1612, by Hermann Vultejus.[40] By that time, the princes' lawyers were beginning to use the terms *provincia* and *patria* to indicate the late-medieval bundles of jurisdictions and rights held by their employers. These rights were seen as expressions of the exclusive, quasi-imperial, judicial and administrative powers of princes over anyone living within a spatially defined area addressed by these terms.[41]

To be sure, the Protestant reformation had bolstered the role of the prince as *pater patriae* tremendously, especially because of his new

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[39] Jacob Spiegel, *Lexicon Iuris Civilis, ex variis autorum commentariis* (Lyon, 1541; ed. Leiden, 1549), 426. Jacob Spiegel was a student of Ulricus Zasius, a major proponent of humanist legal scholarship, see Steven Rowan, *Ulrich Zasius. A jurist in the German Renaissance, 1461–1535* (Frankfurt, 1987), 222–223, quotation 222.

[40] *Lexicon Iuris Civilis par Iacobum Spigelium* (Basel, 1577), 2010–2012; Johannes Oldendorp, 'In Verba Legum XII Tabularem Scholia', in *Lexicon Iuridicum*, ed. Hermann Vultejus (Köln, 1612), 39, alleging that the rights of the 'presides provinciarum' had re-emerged as part of the transferral of 'imperium' and were now the 'mandatis principum'.

[41] E.g. Johannes Althusius, *Dicaeologicae Libri Tres. Totum universum ius, quo utimur methodice complectentes* (Herborn, 1617), lib. 1, ch. 113: 'patriae suae administratione'; Johannes Althusius, *Jurisprudentia Romana Methodice Digesta Libri duo* (Herborn, 1607), ch. 9; see for disputations works such as Heinrich Kornmann, *Ad municipalem et de Incolis. Roma communis nostra Patria est: Commentarius* (Marburg, 1604).

responsibility for the Church.[42] Some princes carried enormous prestige with their tenant-peasants from the onset of this process. For example, as early as 1523, peasants in Hesse petitioned their lord, landgrave Philip, to be their 'pope and emperor'.[43] Thirteen years later, in 1536, landgrave Philip of Hesse's chancellor and advisor Feige reminded his prince in a discussion about the punishment of Anabaptists, that they would not be willing to defend their 'fatherland'.[44] Independent of Melanchthon's advice, referred to above, learned followers of Luther in town and country had begun to include the passion of *amor patriae* in identifying a new relation between faith, justice in civic issues, and the political order. To them, the emerging Protestant *patria* was meant to defend the faith within a given jurisdiction against any attempt at suppression by the emperor. Such diverse references and the legal reasoning of the 1540s are the first pieces of evidence I know of that refer to the scattered and heterogeneous jurisdictions of princes as *patria*. These were, during the second part of the sixteenth century, to receive their own *Kirchenordnungen* and confessions, and not only in Lutheran territories, but also in Catholic Germany. Several dynasties consciously attempted to mould their own history to that of a certain land, so as to provide Bavaria, Saxony, Hesse and later Austria with a regional identity that blended a territorially defined legal district, confession and ruling dynasty. One example is the pamphlet propaganda for elector John Frederick, captured at Mühlberg 1547. It attempted to defend his dynasty in the face of the political disaster that followed in the wake of the catastrophic defeat during the Schmalkaldic War.[45]

However, some of the pamphlets arguing in favour of the defence of the Lutheran *patria*, described it not so much in terms of a princely

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[42] Manfred Rudersdorf, 'Die Generation der lutherischen Landesväter im Reich', in *Die Territorien des Reichs im Zeitalter der Reformation und Konfessionalisierung. Bilanz*, ed. Anton Schindling and Walter Ziegler (Münster, 1997), 137–170.

[43] Walther Sohm, *Territorium und Reformation in der hessischen Geschichte* (Marburg, 1915); Martin Heckel, *Staat und Kirche nach den Lehren der evangelischen Juristen Deutschlands in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1968), 79–82, 227–235; Martin Heckel, 'Religionsbann und landesherrliches Kirchenregiment', in *Die lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland*, ed. Hans-Christoph Rublack (Gütersloh, 1992), 130–162; Michael Stolleis, *Geschichte des öffentlichen Rechts in Deutschland*, 3 vols. (Munich, 1988–1999), I, 161.

[44] *Urkundliche Quellen zur hessischen Reformationsgeschichte. Band IV. Wiedertäuferakten 1527–1626*, ed. Günther Franz (Marburg, 1951), 133.

[45] *Johann Friedrich von Sachsen I. Der lutherische Kurfürst*, ed. Volker Leppin *et al.* (Gütersloh, 2006).

dynastic possession, but as a legal entity of its own, with its own laws, and with the prince as a magistrate bound by those laws. Basilius Monnerus' treatise on defence (*Von der Gegenwehr*) is an example. Pamphlet propaganda legitimising the defence of the Lutheran confession in a given territory did, by no means only or primarily bolster princely rule. It argued that defence of the laws and religion of the *patria* was a common duty and right, to be exercised by those with an office for it; eventually, that office was also going to be claimed by territorial estates against their own princes.[46]

IV

Half a century later, in the first two decades of the seventeenth century, Hessian noblemen would call themselves 'patriots' when resisting their prince, and while their fatherland remained Germany, it had also become their small Hessian landgraviate. It is time to return to the vexed problem of identity. I am often asked whether the fact that noblemen, gentry, soldiers and so forth referred to themselves as 'patriots' from around 1600, amounts to them having the 'identity' of a patriot. My response is that the later sixteenth and seventeenth-century patriots I know of would have had a great problem in understanding the very term 'identity' with regard to themselves. When pressed on the issue, they would 'identify' themselves as Christians, with one single entity peculiar to themselves that made up their 'identity'—their soul which would ultimately be judged only by God.

What, in the end, is an identity?[47] We probably all have many identities, as teachers, students, friends, spouses, and so forth. These, however, modern sociology would address as 'roles'. Identity is linked to what makes our actions or *being* identical to something. Since the later

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[46] Robert von Friedeburg, 'In defence of patria. Resisting magistrates and the duties of patriots in the Empire, 1530s-1640s', *Sixteenth century journal* 32 (2001), 357–382; Robert von Friedeburg, *Widerstandsrecht und Konfessionskonflikt. Gemeiner Mann und Notwehr im deutsch-britischen Vergleich, 1530–1669* (Berlin, 1999); Robert von Friedeburg, 'Welche Wegscheide in die Neuzeit? Protestantisches Widerstandsrecht, "Gemeiner Mann" und konfessioneller Landespatriotismus zwischen "Münster" und "Magdeburg"', *Historische Zeitschrift* 270 (2000), 561–616; Robert von Friedeburg, '"Confusion" around the Magdeburg confession and the making of "revolutionary early modern resistance theory"', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 97 (2006), 307–318.

[47] See also, in this volume, the suggestions of the contribution of Peter Hoppenbrouwers.

eighteenth century this has been understood as that single autonomous personality that grew from mainly Protestant introspection in the seventeenth century, through the cult of nature and feelings during the eighteenth century, into what was *European* during the nineteenth century, that grand century of the diary, of novels, of opera.

As to the situation before the eighteenth and nineteenth century, opinions differ. Aristotelian philosophy knew, of course, a casuistry of the relation of reason and passions, but hardly in the sense of a case history of the unique psychological make up of individuals. Law knew of the concept of the individual as a bearer of rights and claims and did know the concept of property of oneself—*dominium in se ipsum*. By the same token, the notion of *defendere ipsi* was used by contemporaries. But that *ipse* did not have a corollary in a scholarly assessment of its unique make up to provide for an 'identity'. Theology, of course, assumed the uniqueness of a created soul, the bearer of the capacity to be saved or damned. But that quality it shared with all other souls, and the various confessional assumptions on conversion were not interested in the individuality of that process in the modern sense. The sphere of the self may need to be understood in more restricted terms. Cicero had delineated four *personae,* in his attempt to give a systematic account of appropriate actions, understood as fulfilling the rational abilities of human nature against the background of the dissolution of the republic and the problems of vice and ambition.[48] These *personae* were, first, our common human rationality, allowing us to identify what is honest and appropriate (*De Officiis* I, 107 *honestum decorumque*). Secondly, the specific mind or character (*animus*) of an individual, with Cicero listing happiness, misery, wit or cunning as attributes common to all. A third *persona* could be developed by any extraordinary experience, leaving its mark on us. Finally, the fourth *persona* is the one that we ourselves wish or choose to adopt (*De Officiis* I 115).

All four *personae* need to be considered in understanding what it means to act appropriately in a chosen way of life (*De Officiis*, I 120 *genus vitae*). In general, we should strive to follow our ancestors, but take into account our nature (in the second sense), avoid vices (*De Officiis*, I 121), and live according to our limitations (De *Officiis,* I 110).

[48] Willibald Heilmann, *Ethische Reflexion und römische Lebenswirklichkeit in Ciceros-Schrift 'De officiis'* (Wiesbaden, 1982); Andrew R. Dyck, *A commentary on Cicero, 'De officiis'* (Ann Arbor, 1996); Wilfried Nippel, 'Klientel, Gesellschaftsstruktur und politisches System in der römischen Republik', *Humanistische Bildung* 22 (2002), 137–151.

With respect to the three latter *personae*, the specifics of our upbringing, age, duties as magistrate or as private person will determine fitting conduct. That means, and here is the crucial difference from modern concepts of personality and its identity, that an inequality of status, based on ancestry, could be seen as quite legitimate. It was a long process, starting in the later sixteenth century, and 'our' patriots sit somehow in between it. On the one hand, many of those making the claim to be patriots were conspicuously connecting that claim to their lineage, their ancestors, as proof of their emotional make-up, their fitness to rule. For the underlying passion of love to fatherland—Horace's *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*—was not for common people. Right into the eighteenth century debates raged on the question of whether merchants or artisans could be patriots or not. On the other hand, the claim to be a patriot was articulated well beyond elite circles, not only in England or the Netherlands, but also in German lands, and it was generally used to claim rights from people who were seen as subjects.

Martin Ingram has found signs of a much more profound sense of self, in terms of an individual emotional development defining a unique self, in English marital litigation in the later fifteenth and throughout the sixteenth century. It is possible that marital litigation may be just the source to unearth that kind of evidence. What concerns us here, however, is the connection between what a person is and 'state-building'. In the latter process the historical actors were princes, burghers and nobilities, competing for allegiance. It is only by the beginning of the seventeenth century that the neologism 'patriot' can be found in the sources relating to the early modern Empire in its more narrow sense. It signals quite frequently opposition to or at least tension with princely government. Those calling themselves patriots in Germany were invariably members of territorial Estates who claimed to defend the laws and liberties of their territorial fatherland against the incursions, religious or otherwise, of their princes. Princes had histories produced of their jurisdictions as alleged fatherlands dating back to ancient times. Tacitus' Germany was reproduced for every single tribe mentioned, each with its own prince at the top. But Estates took up these histories, reinterpreted them, some even reappeared as evidence at the Imperial Chamber court when Estates sued their princes.[49]

[49] Von Friedeburg, 'The making of patriots'; Von Friedeburg, 'Why did seventeenth-century Estates address the jurisdictions of their princes as fatherlands?'.

Again, these are seventeenth-century developments and not my topic here. What I would like to stress, however, and by conclusion, are three points.

First there was the combination of print with a scholarly interest in humanism, that was adopted by interested parties, and which seems to have been crucial for the dissemination of the type of terms that we now use to describe identity. 'Nation' and 'fatherland' were buzz-words meant to persuade people to pay extra dues, to impress a public that was not easy to define but which was important enough not to be ignored—as Charles V himself realised.

Secondly, none of that could change the fact that Germany was a multi-dynastic system with no political centre and as such was very different from England or France. The Empire first came to be called a fatherland in the later fifteenth century and by 1600 its multitude of 'lands' had been replaced by 'fatherlands'; the emerging territories of princes and cities. To be sure, Cicero's use of the term *patria* had been shaped by his own distinction between the *patria communis*, the Empire, and the *patria* of his own birthplace outside Rome and thus any use of the term brought with it, automatically, that double meaning. There was never any contradiction or even tension in being a patriot of both the German Empire and the emerging, territorial states.

Thirdly and most importantly, many German medieval and early modern historians, no matter how much they have endeavoured to destroy the myth of a ready-made German nation in the Middle Ages, have clung to the alleged continuity of identity of these smaller regions. Of course, especially since the sixteenth century princes sponsored a growing historiography on such alleged continuities.[50] But that should not obscure the fact that these works were commissioned in order to produce history as argument for specific occasions and as part of purpose-made strategies. In unexpected ways, such arguments may have later taken root, but Germany was run by competing dynasties and riddled by religious problems—and identities were shaped according to them. This is why Lucien Bely, John Morrill and I have set out to look again at the transformation of Christian Europe into states claiming

[50] E.g. Gerhard Menk, 'Recht und Raum in einem waldeckischen Reichskamm ergerichtsprozeß', *Geschichtsblätter für Waldeck* 88 (2000), 12–47; Thomas Fuchs, *Traditionsstiftung und Erinnerungspolitik. Geschichtsschreibung in Hessen in der frühen Neuzeit* (Kassel, 2002).

some national identity, and have named our project 'The transformation of Christian Europe: Princes, dynastic agglomerations and fatherlands in shaping European society'. Rather than assuming a real continuity with the past and deep roots for the identities shaped by it, we argue that these resulted from sudden dynastic change, wars and other unforeseen conflicts, against the background of princely dynastic struggles and the complexities of the agglomerations within which princes had to operate. Fatherlands, as John Elliott has reminded us, surely emerged in such circumstances,[51] but often as a consequence of propaganda strategies and dynastic shifts. They did not necessarily survive for long. We want to bring coincidence, accident, chance and strategy back into what has long been the demesne of roots and deep layers.[52]

[51] Elliott, 'Revolution and continuity', 48–49.

[52] Robert von Friedeburg, 'Patrioten in der frühen Neuzeit. Teilhabe an den öffentlichen Angelegenheiten im Verlauf von Konfessionalisierung und europäischen Mächtekonflikten', in *Wege der Neuzeit. Festschrift für Heinz Schilling zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Stefan Ehrenpreis *et al.* (Berlin, 2007), 431–456.

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